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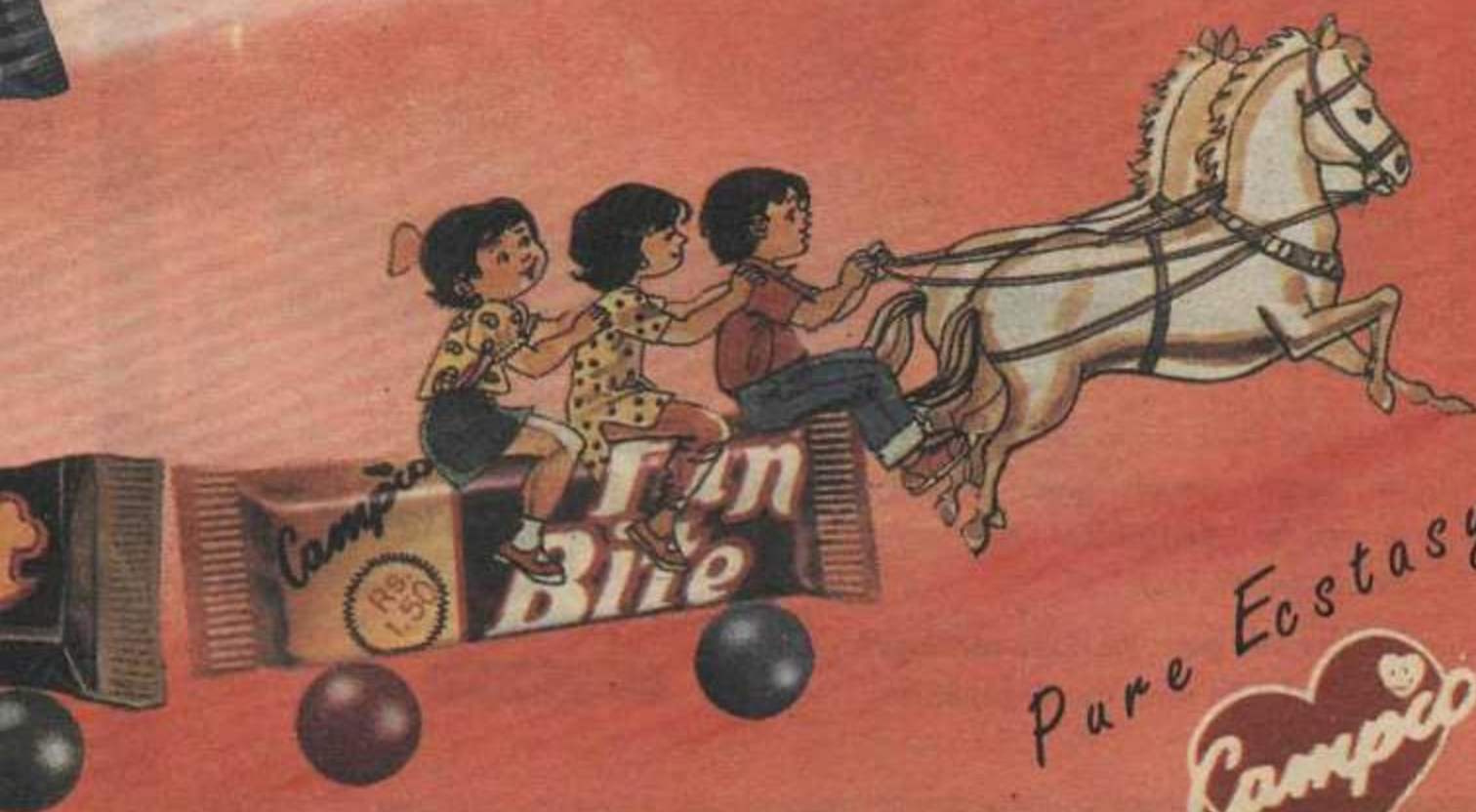
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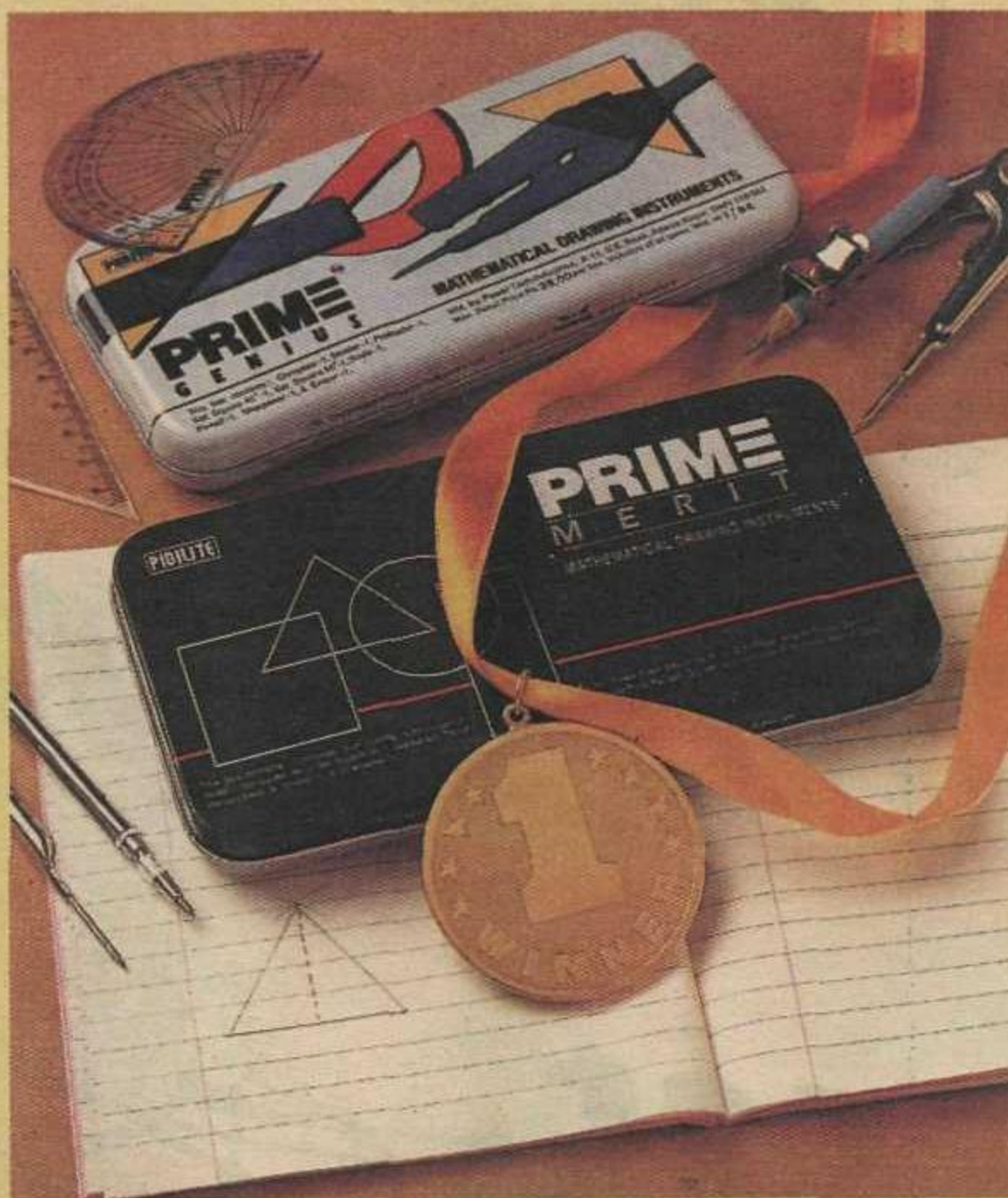


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NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 25 JULY 1994 No. 1

THE MYSTERIOUS NECKLACE: Jayavarma, of Kosala, reads the letter Vichitravarma had asked Jayasena to give to him after his death. It is about the pearl necklace the late king had kept safe from the greedy King of Kambhoj. But where is it? Jayavarma is unable to decipher the coded language of the letter. Generations later, the letter is now with King Sushena. He, too, is unable to decode the words. Will clever Keertisena do it? Will his son Keertivarma unravel the message? Or will the two of them together succeed? Or will King Garudadatta of Kambhoj steal a march over them?

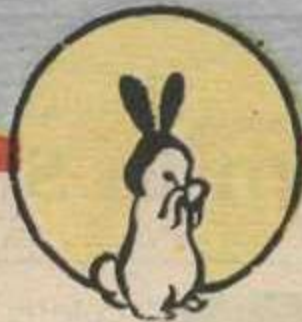
VEER HANUMAN: The incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Rama has come to an end, and He is back in Vaikunta. It is now *Dwapara Yuga*. Sage Narada has told Hanuman that he will be able to see his Lord again in the new *yuga*. Satyabhama insists on Krishna himself going after the Parijata tree. Indra is furious. How can anyone take away the divine tree from his Devaloka? He attacks Garuda on which Krishna and his consort are travelling. Garuda deflects Indra's weapon with his wings. Krishna decides to bring down the pride in Satyabhama and Garuda...

PLUS your favourite features **PANCHATANTRA** and **CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT**.

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"Burden" of Education

After a two-month long summer vacation, it is time for schools to reopen and start a new academic session. Apart from everything else, a reunion with their friends and classmates makes children eagerly look forward to a return to their classrooms.

However, one factor that might put them out would be the number of textbooks and notebooks they would have to carry to school every day. The authorities in charge of Education as well as the schools have, since recent times, been keen on packing a good deal of what they simply categorise as 'knowledge' into the syllabus. As a result, each discipline of knowledge is churned out in the shape of textbooks, which the children have to study, to take them to the periodical tests and the annual exam at the end of the year, all conducted by their respective school or the body appointed for the purpose. Textbooks necessarily require elaboration and explanation by teachers, which have to be recorded in notebooks.

The sight of children carrying school-bags loaded with textbooks and notebooks provoked some people to compare them to pack-mules! Some others, who represent the people in the country's Parliament, raised voices against this horrible state of affairs.

The Government appointed a committee to look into the complaints. The Yashpal Committee not only recommended a reduction of the "burden" children carry, but wanted the "interviews" for admission to even nursery and primary classes abolished, and the quantum of "housework" regulated.

It is learnt that all Government-run Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Schools, and other special institutions have decided to implement the recommendations from the next academic year. What about all other schools? At least, cannot a beginning be made with the children in primary classes?

A New Dawn in South Africa



"I do hereby swear to be faithful to the Republic of South Africa." This simple oath was taken by Mr. Nelson Mandela on May 10, while assuming office as the President of that country. The previous day, when the newly elected Parliament held its first session, the ANC leader was the unanimous choice for the august office. He thus became South Africa's first black President.

The blacks of South Africa had led a life of deprivation and oppression ever since some European adventurers set foot there to prospect for gold and other minerals of which the country was rich. The Dutch East India Company established a settlement in Cape Town as far back as 1652. They expanded into a

colony and spread to the interior. A little over a hundred years later, Britain acquired the colony for strategic reasons. All ships moving between the Indian Ocean or the Arabian Sea and the Atlantic had to touch the Cape of Good Hope at the southernmost tip of the African continent. The Cape was thus a good source of income, besides being a strategic location for any naval operation.

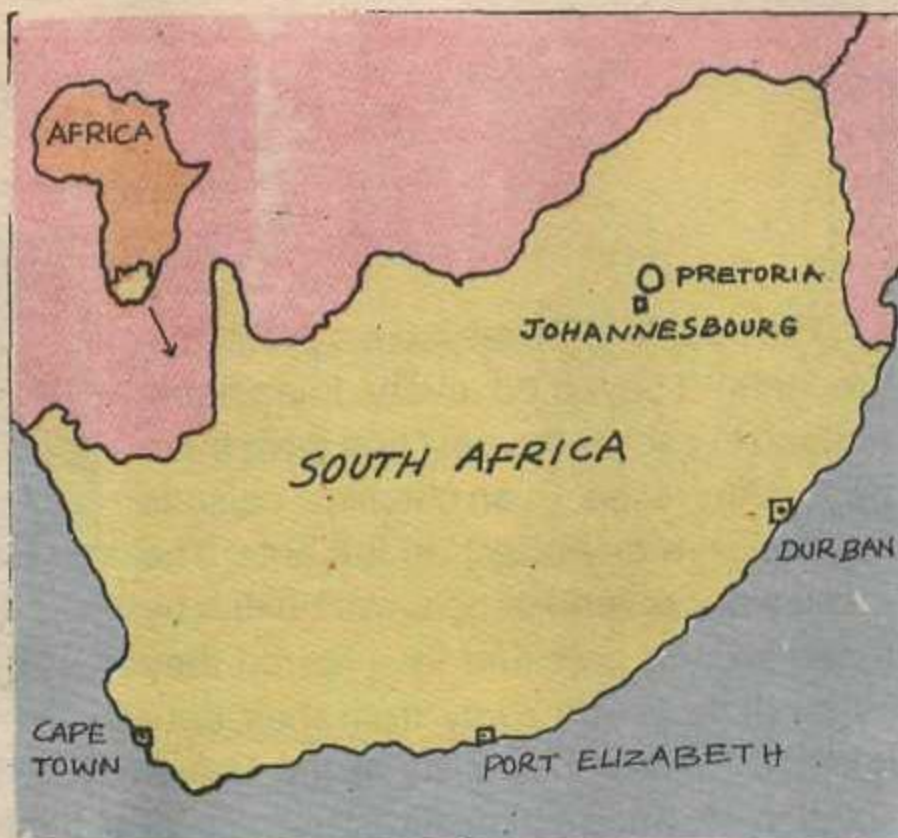
The white settlers drove the black inhabitants to the interior and prevented them from coming out of their 'homelands'. They had no admission to the market-places, hospitals, or schools. They lost all their rights over the areas where they once lived. The white people, though in a minority, exerted their supremacy and practised racial discrimination.

Among the sufferers were also Indians, mostly from the present Gujarat and Maharashtra, and South India. We are familiar with the story of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who, despite being a Barrister having taken his Law degree from England, was thrown out of a train from his First Class compartment to make way for an Englishman. This was in the early 1890s. Gandhiji then formed the Natal Indian Congress to fight racial discrimination. Even at that time, the method he adopted was *satyagraha* or passive resistance.

Mr. Nelson Mandela, who was impressed by this movement, prompted the African National Congress (ANC) to adopt the same method to get their rights accepted by the white rulers. In 1948, the Government legalised 'apartheid', and the ANC launched a struggle to wrest power from the Englishmen. In 1952, Mr. Mandela was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The ANC was not leaderless, but its struggle could not make much dent in the government till Mr. De Klerk became President in 1989. He realised how many countries of the world South Africa had alienated. No cricketing nation would send its team there, nor would a team from South Africa be allowed to play elsewhere. South Africa could not even participate in the Olympic Games. Mr. De Klerk decided to end apartheid and, as a first step, released Mr. Mandela.

He reciprocated by immediately starting negotiations with the white minority government and among the various black groups, like the Zulus. His main aim was to hold general elections in which the blacks also could vote and enter Parliament. The dates were at last fixed, and several countries of the world sent observers to ensure that the elections were free and fair. By and large, they were peaceful, too.

The African National Congress polled



more than 62 per cent of the votes and was thus qualified to choose a leader to head the government. Mr. Mandela was the Parliament's unanimous choice. He made one of his close associates as well as Mr. De Klerk as Deputy Presidents and gave four berths in his 39-member cabinet to leaders of Indian origin. The Parliament also elected an Indian lady as the Speaker.

In his inaugural speech, President Mandela said: "We shall re-build South Africa where both black and white will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity."

We can be certain that this "most famous political prisoner" will ever remember Mahatma Gandhi, from whom he drew inspiration to lead his people to victory.



NEWS FLASH

Fly versus ants

The people of Texas have a problem – fire ants! They tried every imaginable method to control the pest and drive them away; they failed. Even chemical poisons did not have any effect on the ants. The result was, several people were bitten by these savage ants and they feared they might have to run away from their ant-

infested homes. Scientists at the University of Texas ultimately came up with a solution – to bring a parasitic fly from Brazil, to fight the ants. Researchers have found

that the fly could be prompted to lay its eggs on the head of the ants and the larvae would then eat the brain of the ants!



A promise kept

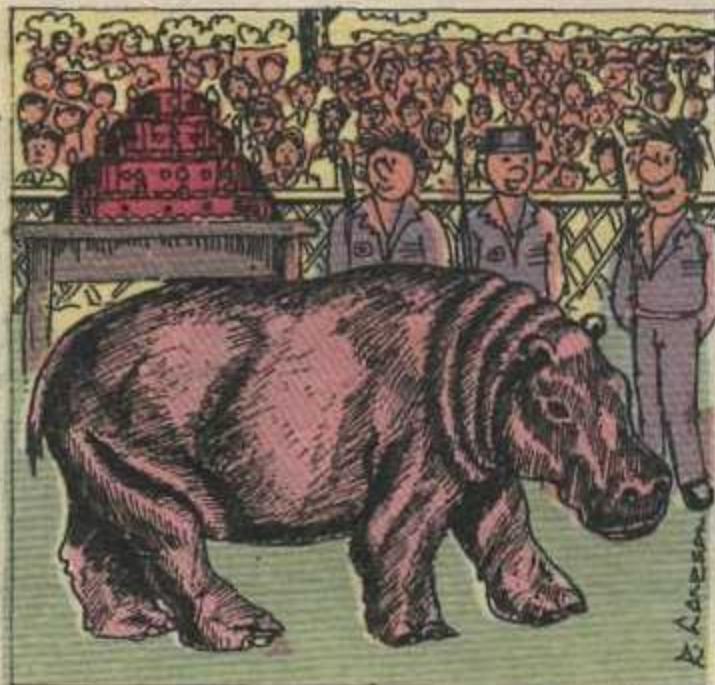
There is so much talk about inculcating in children the reading habit. The general complaint is, they spend a lot of time in front of the TV and have little or no time to read anything other than their text-books. The U.S.A. is currently having a programme

called RIF (reading is fundamental) to encourage children to read books regularly. The Principal of an elementary school in North Hollywood, California, found that she might have to think of some desperate method to make her students 'bookworms'. So she made a promise to them – that she would eat a worm each for every book they read. Did they take her seriously? They read two books the day they had the RIF project. The Principal was delighted. She called the school assembly, and the children between 6 and 11 gathered, wondering whether the Principal would keep her promise. Yes, she did. Shirley Dirado swallowed two earthworms, drowning them

with a glass of orange juice. She achieved two things: the children learnt that a promise once made has to be kept; and in no time did they show promise of becoming bookworms!

Happy birthday, dear hippo!

Ever heard of a birthday cake made of tasty vegetables? That is what Tanga got on her 60th birthday on April 26. Tanga who, did you ask? She is believed to be the oldest hippopotamus in the world – at least in any zoo in the world. Her birth in 1934 in Germany's Leipzig Zoo is a recorded event and photographs had appeared in newspapers and books. She is now an inmate of the Hellabrunn Zoo in Munich. Send her a birthday card next year, care of the Zoo Director!



A record third time

For the same person to ski to the North Pole, then to the South Pole, and then climb the Everest, it certainly is a world record. That is what Erling Kagge has achieved. Taking it chronologically – this 31-year-old Norwegian lawyer, accompanied by his friend, Borge Ousland, skied to the North Pole in 1990. They did not have any external aid – like a dog-sledge or any support from air. Last year, Kagge went alone to the South Pole, skiing. On May 5 last, he began the trek to the Everest from

the base camp at 8,000 metres. Four days later, he reached the 8,848m summit. Sir Edmund Hillary, who "conquered" the Everest in 1953 along with India's Tenzing Norgay, led an expedition to the South Pole five years later. He also went to the North Pole, but by air. Kagge, however, is the only person who has "footed" to all three places. On April 23 last, his friend Ousland skied to the North Pole a second time – alone. In his Everest expedition, Kagge was one of an 8-member team led by William Wendel, from Minnesota, U.S.A.





THE CLEVER BRAHMIN CAUGHT HOLD OF THE LOVER, GAVE HIM A GOOD THRASHING, AND KICKED OUT HIS UN-FAITHFUL WIFE.

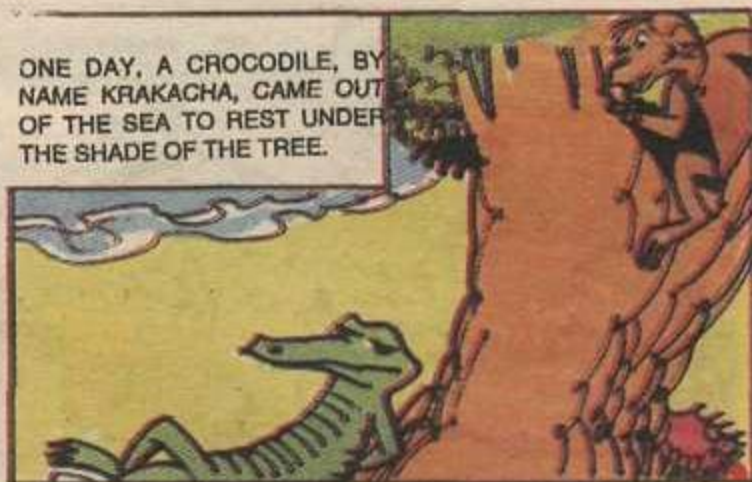
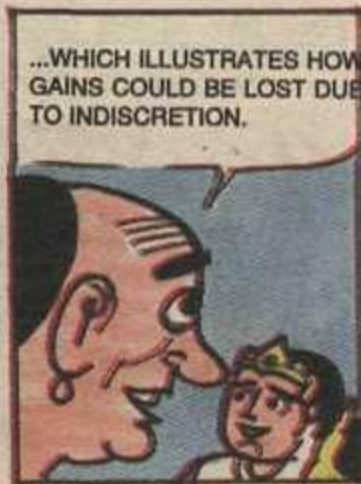


SO, PLAN WELL, WAIT FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT, AND THEN STRIKE.

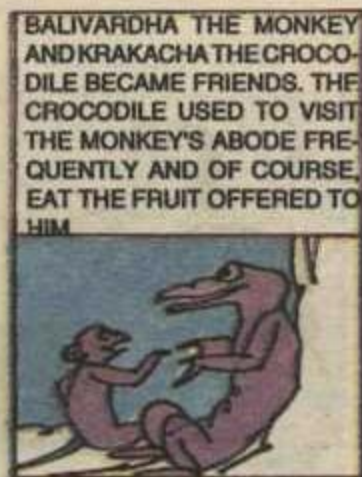


He who manifests generosity and affability will be surrounded by numerous relatives.

—Thirukkural



Forgetfulness will mar fame, even as permanent poverty destroys knowledge.



The king defends the whole world; justice, when administered without discrimination, will defend the king.



Men without kind looks are men without eyes; those who have eyes are not devoid of kind looks.

Towards Better English

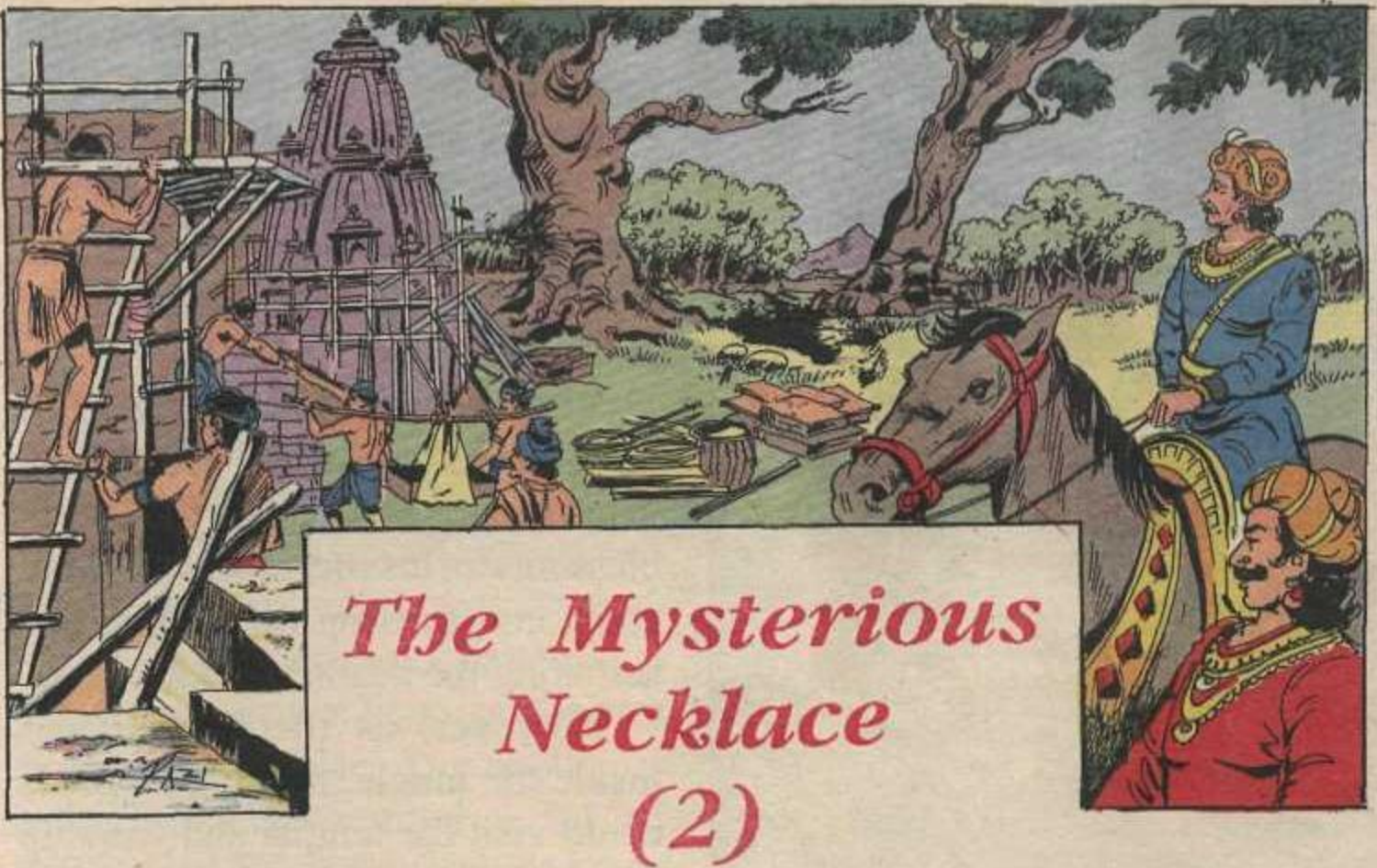
Without prior appointment

The whole day they were together – Asima Sahoo (of Dhenkanal) and Jayanti – in the classroom and on the playground. After dinner, Asima got busy preparing the lessons for the next day. But where was her Maths text-book? She emptied her school bag, but it was not in the bag. She searched on her study table and in the drawers. Where would it have disappeared? Suddenly she remembered. After play, she and Jayanti had rested for a while when she had taken out the Maths book to clear a doubt with her friend. They heard the hoot of the school bus and rushed to catch it. In their hurry, Jayanti who had the book in her hand must have stuffed it inside her bag. Asima now wanted the book very badly. She was in a fix. It was already 10 o' clock. She told her father who realised her predicament. Jayanti's house was not that far away. She could take her brother along with her, but he advised her not to knock at the door if she were to find the house in darkness. It would be unfair to wake up Jayanti's grandparents with whom she was staying. When Asima reached Jayanti's place, she found lights in the front room. She gave a soft knock on the door. It was Jayanti's grandfather himself who opened the door.

"Asima! Why this pop-visit?" She explained the purpose of her visit. Jayanti brought the book, and soon Asima and brother were on their way back. She wondered what her friend's grandfather had meant by 'pop-visit'. Of course, she knew Jayanti was a pop-music fan. Did he think that she had wanted to listen to some discs at that unearthly hour? A *pop-visit* is one made at an odd time. Even a casual visit – without a prior appointment – can be a pop-visit.

Reader Jyotiranjan Biswal, also of Dhenkanal, wants to know the difference between *deportation* and *extradition*. During the British rule, some of the political activists were deported from the country; they were sent to the Andamans, an escape from where was next to impossible. Last year, Bombay was rocked by a series of bomb blasts. India feels that the kingpin behind these incidents is hiding in a foreign country, and wants to bring him to India on extradition, which can be done only with the help of that country. And that is possible only if India has signed an extradition treaty with that country.





The Mysterious Necklace (2)

(King Sushena of Kosala is impressed with Keertisena, daughter of his bosom friend and adviser, Jayasena. He challenges her to waylay his son, Keertivarma, and keep him captive in a temple for three days—all by herself. She agrees. Jayasena then tells her about his grandfather—with the same name—who was the confidante of Sushena's grandfather, Vichitravarma, and of the consecrated pearl necklace that the king received from his adviser. While wearing the necklace, Vichitravarma had come upon an exquisitely carved idol of Shakti. Where should he install it?)

Keertisena intently listened to her father Jayasena's narration about his own grandfather and of the pearl necklace that he had gifted to his friend Vichitravarma, the then ruler of Kosala.

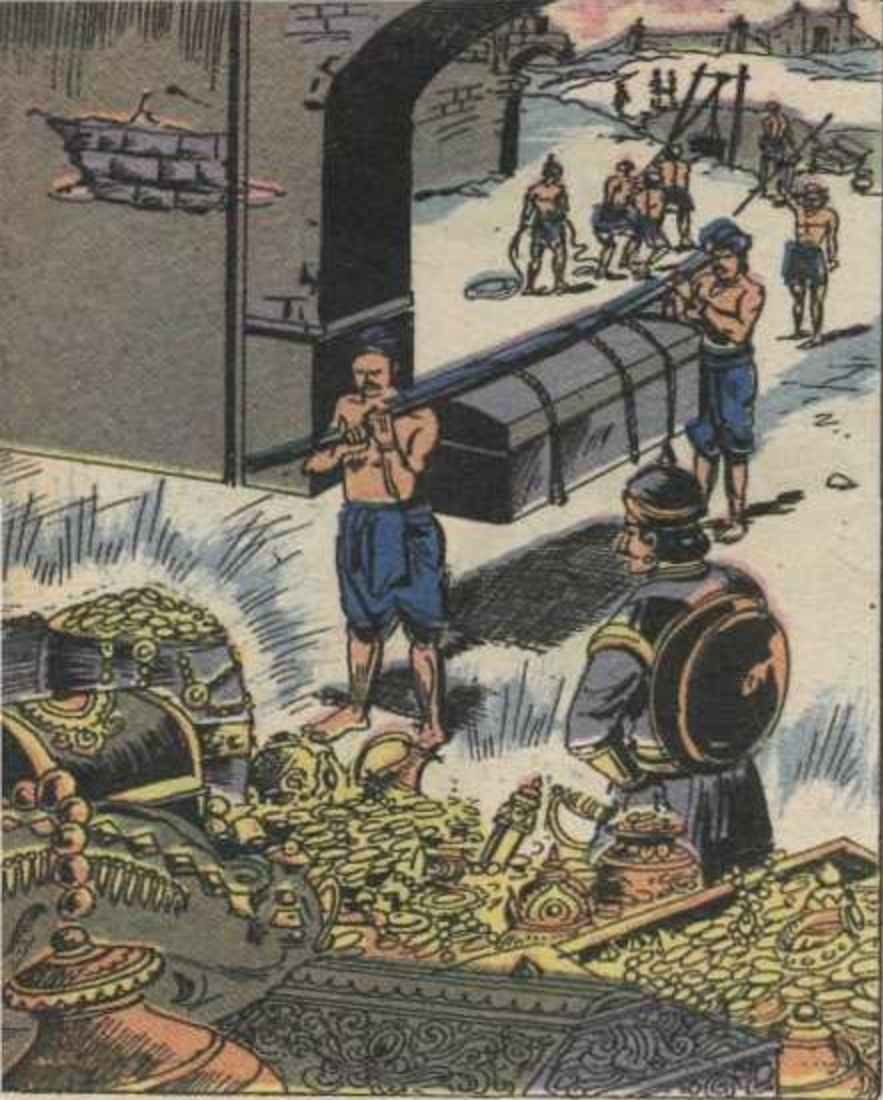
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Vichitravarma called off his hunting expedition and returned to the palace. He wanted to carry the

idol with him, but his minister, Prahlad, had advised him to seek the opinion of learned people as to what he should do with the idol. Vichitravarma sent for his adviser, Jayasena, who was both happy as well as sad on hearing the king's experience. Jayasena suggested a meeting of the senior members of the royal court. After a discussion,

THE MACHINATIONS OF A NEIGHBOUR





which went on for days together, it was decided that a temple be built at the very spot where the idol had surfaced.

The king was, however, cautioned that he himself would not benefit from constructing the temple or by worshipping the idol. One of his descendants would receive all the blessings of Shakti and he would acquire more regions and expand his kingdom and rule like an emperor. His name and fame would spread everywhere and the Devi temple, too, would become famous, attracting thousands of devotees from different countries, near and

far. The flow the devotees would only increase when the temple had festivities and special worships for the people's welfare and the prosperity of the kingdom. And that would be a golden era for the kingdom.

Vichitravarma was excited when he realised that he would be instrumental in securing the Devi's blessings for his successors. He went about constructing the temple and installing the beautiful idol there.

However, as the temple was inside the jungle, not many people could visit the temple and worship the deity. They found it difficult to journey to the jungle, and even those who managed to go there once thought twice before they paid another visit. By and by, the people of Kosala even forgot that there was a temple dedicated to Shakti in their kingdom. King Vichitravarma alone made it a regular practice to ride to the temple and offer worship to the deity.

Days passed; months and years went by. Vichitravarma ruled Kosala to the best of his ability and with the help of the pearl necklace with mysterious powers. Many a time, he was able to unearth the treasures hidden in the earth at several places.



He made use of the wealth he thus got for the welfare of his subjects. He became very popular among his people, who spread his name far and wide. The fame of the pearl necklace, too, became widely known. He did not know then that this would later bring misery to him.

Kosala prospered day by day. To its east lay Kambhoj. The jungle that separated Kosala from Kambhoj was where the Devi temple was situated. The King of Kambhoj, Chakraditya, was a good man at heart, but he was not a capable ruler. As a result, his subjects experienced a lot of difficulties. When they came to know how their neighbours led a peaceful life in a prosperous country, some of them even went over to Kosala and took up residence there. The large-hearted Vichitravarma gave them refuge.

Some more years went by. Now Vichitravarma, his bosom friend and adviser Jayasena, and King Chakraditya of Kambhoj all had become old. In Kosala, the eldest son of Vichitravarma succeeded him as king. In neighbouring Kambhoj, Chakraditya made arrangements to crown his elder son as the ruler, though, like his father, he was also not clever. This move was resented



to by the king's second son, who managed to put his brother and father in prison. He proclaimed himself as the King of Kambhoj. Varunadatta proved to be a cruel ruler. He was jealous of Kosala because of the fame it had earned and because people from his own kingdom had taken refuge there. Somehow or other, he believed that Kosala's prosperity was all due to the pearl necklace with the mysterious powers. He decided then and there that he would possess it, hook or by crook.

Jayavarma of Kosala was fond of pomp and show. He had a fancy for



opulence which was reflected in the buildings and edifices he constructed. He invited beautiful dancers from the neighbouring countries to give performances in his *darbar*. He sent them away with rich rewards. In short, he found little or no time for ruling the kingdom. His father, the ageing Vichitravarma, was sad when he saw the kingdom slowly losing its fame and name. The people of Kosala had no good word for their ruler, who became unpopular with them.

Varunadatta, whose spies were bringing him news of Kosala every now and then, marked time to strike

at Kosala. He commissioned a dancer called Kanakalata to go to Kosala and get hold of the pearl necklace after making Jayavarma unconscious. She knew that if she succeeded in her mission, she could expect a lot of reward from her king.

As Vichitravarma saw that his son was being indifferent to day-to-day administration, he every now and then interfered to set things right. He was aware of the manoeuvres of the neighbouring kingdoms, especially Kambhoj. Spies had brought him news of the moves of Varunadatta. The special mission he entrusted to Kanakalata, too, had reached Vichitravarma's ears.

When Vichitravarma handed over the kingdom, he had also given his son the pearl necklace that he wore. Jayavarma used to put it on, especially when he attended the daily *darbar*. Vichitravarma went to his friend Jayasena to tell him that Kanakalata from Kambhoj had already reached Kosala to steal the necklace.

"Please don't worry," Jayasena tried to put him at ease. "I've a similar necklace with me—though not consecrated with any powers. We shall substitute the one you gave to Jayavarma with the other one. Don't

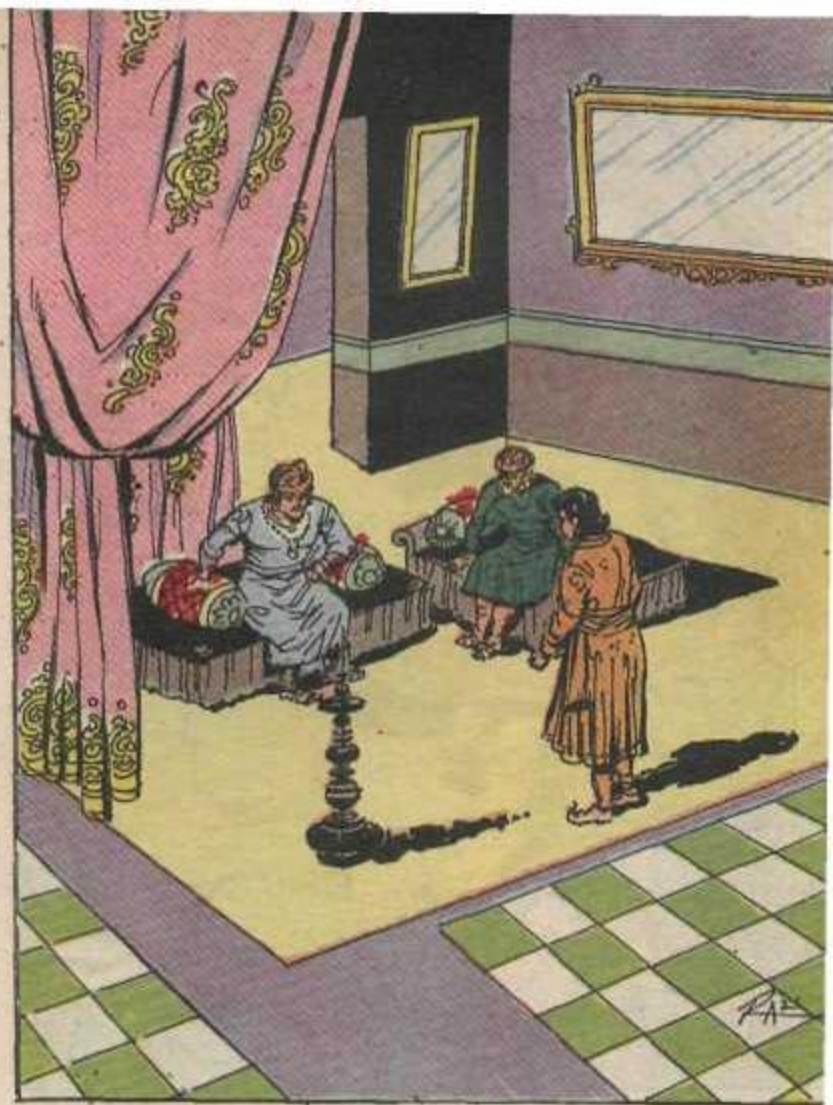


let anyone know about this. Only we both shall know of the substitution."

With the help of Jayavarma's bodyguard, they managed to exchange the necklaces. The one with mysterious powers came back into the hands of Vichitravarma, who kept it safe.

When Kanakalata went up to Jayavarma after a performance, it was the second necklace that Jayavarma had on him. He was not aware of the exchange that had taken place. The young King of Kosala was carried away by Kanakalata's charm and beautiful dance. He could not think of a costlier gift to give her than the pearl necklace he was wearing. Before long, Kanakalata was on her way back to Kambhoj after successfully achieving her mission.

Soon after she had left the boundaries of Kosala, Jayavarma realised his folly. What had he gone and done? Parted with the pearl necklace that had magical powers? He repented his action and decided to confess everything to his father. When he went to Vichitravarma, Jayasena was with him. After listening to Jayavarma, his father heaved a great sigh. "There's no point in worrying now. The precious



necklace has already gone to someone else. Only thing is, in the hands of anyone other than the members of the royal family of Kosala, its magical powers will not work. So, you may forget your loss," said Vichitravarma.

Jayasena appeared as if he was hearing something strange, while Jayavarma was really concerned. "It's only befitting for rulers and kings to appreciate the fine arts and encourage them," remarked Vichitravarma, "but they should not spend all their time only in promoting arts. A king's duty is to look after the welfare of his subjects, ensure their





safety, and give them a peaceful life. It's not proper for the king alone to lead a life of pomp and pleasure. The king should live for his subjects. Their happiness gets priority over his own happiness and joy. You must always remember that!" he advised his son.

Jayavarma felt guilty of forgetting to carry out the duties of a king. He sought his father's forgiveness before he went back to his own chambers. "You must be wondering why I told that lie to my son," said Vichitravarma, now turning to Jayasena. "It's fortunate that we came to know of the moves of the King of Kambhoj.

That's how we could replace the necklace. If we had not known of the conspiracy, then Jayavarma, whose weakness we know, would have given away the unique necklace and it would have ultimately reached Varunadatta's hands."

Jayasena was still contemplating in silence. "Do you think we can now tell Jayavarma everything and return the pearl necklace to him, so that he can wear it once again?" asked Vichitravarma. "Jayasena, I know how affectionate you are towards my son. In this case, one's love or affection should not be made secondary or subservient to duty. No doubt, Jayavarma will be repenting his action, but how are we certain that he won't go back to his old ways? Jayavarma is my son, but it is also true that he has no interest in ruling the kingdom. Everyone knows that he's not clever. If Varunadatta were to come to know that the necklace he has managed to get hold of from here is *not* the real necklace, and that the real one remains in our possession, he'll certainly make another attempt to get the real necklace. People may, on the contrary, take it that we have lost the real necklace and if it gets into the hands of someone other



than the rulers of Kosala, that its miraculous powers will fade away. In no time will people forget everything about the necklace. So, I've taken a decision: I'll give it only to a brave and clever descendant."

Jayasena listened to Vichitra-varma patiently and felt that his stand was correct. One thing was certain: Jayavarma did not know how to take advantage of the necklace. It must really go to someone cleverer than Jayavarma.

By now Varunadatta, too, heard of the necklace, that it would lose its powers if it ever got into the possession of anyone other than the ruler of Kosala. He feared that all his efforts had gone waste, and day by day, he grew weak.

In Kosala, Jayavarma underwent a metamorphosis. He now took greater interest in administration and carried out all the duties of a king diligently. Once again peace and

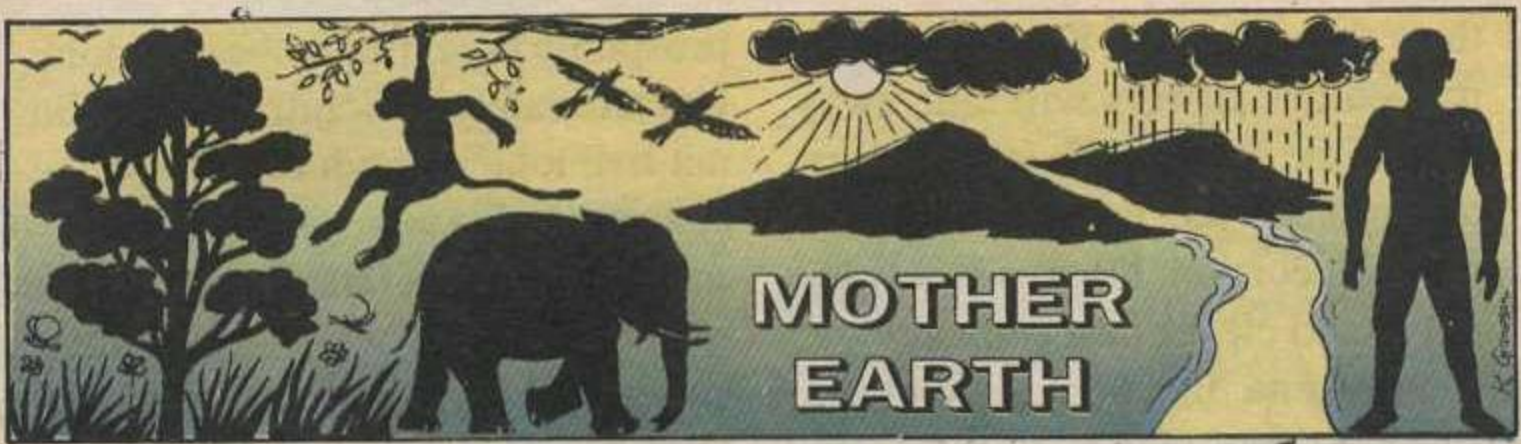
prosperity prevailed in the kingdom. Unfortunately, Vichitravarma did not live long enough to witness the changes in his son.

Jayasena, too, fell ill and when he realised his end was approaching, he sent for Jayavarma and told him all that had happened after he parted with the precious necklace. "Your father did not have any faith in you. He wanted to hand over the real necklace to your son or grandson. We both might have been close as friends, but even to me he did not confide where he had hidden the necklace. He merely gave me a letter asking me to hand it to you before my death."

Jayasena then asked for a small wooden casket to be brought to him. He handed it to Jayavarma and the next moment he was no more. People believed that the two bosom friends would have met again in heaven.

-To continue





"CAN YOU BUY THE SKY?"

How did the so-called primitive people view the earth? A hundred and forty years ago, the President of the United States of America proposed to buy a large tract of land belonging to a tribe of the natives of the American continent. The Chief of the tribe (popularly known as Red Indians), wrote the following letter in reply:

"How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

"If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

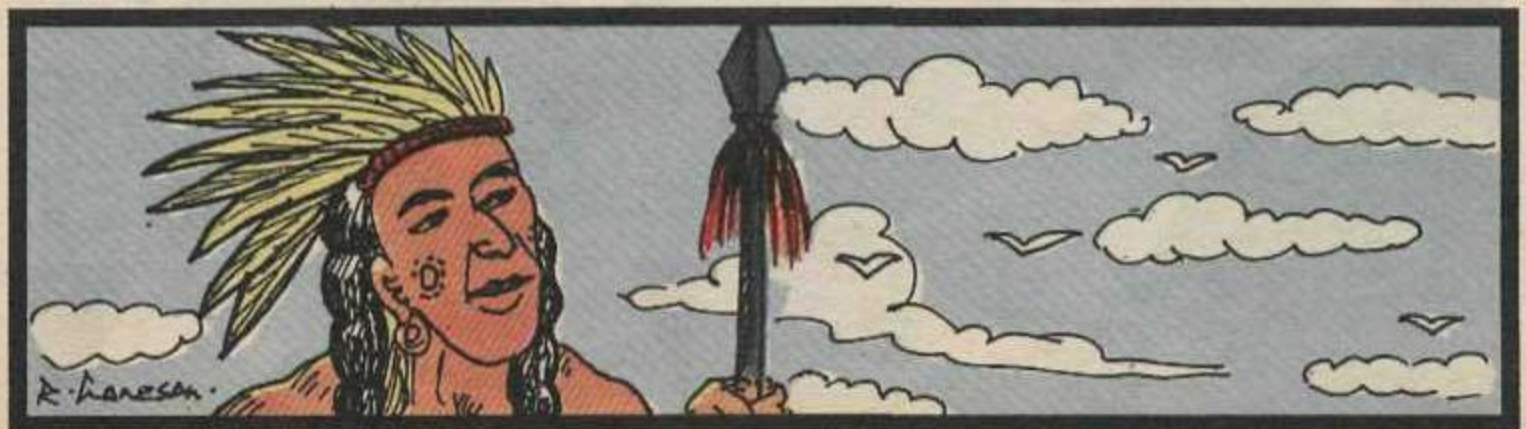
"We are part of the earth, and it is part of us. The rocky crests, the juices of the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man – all belong to the same family.

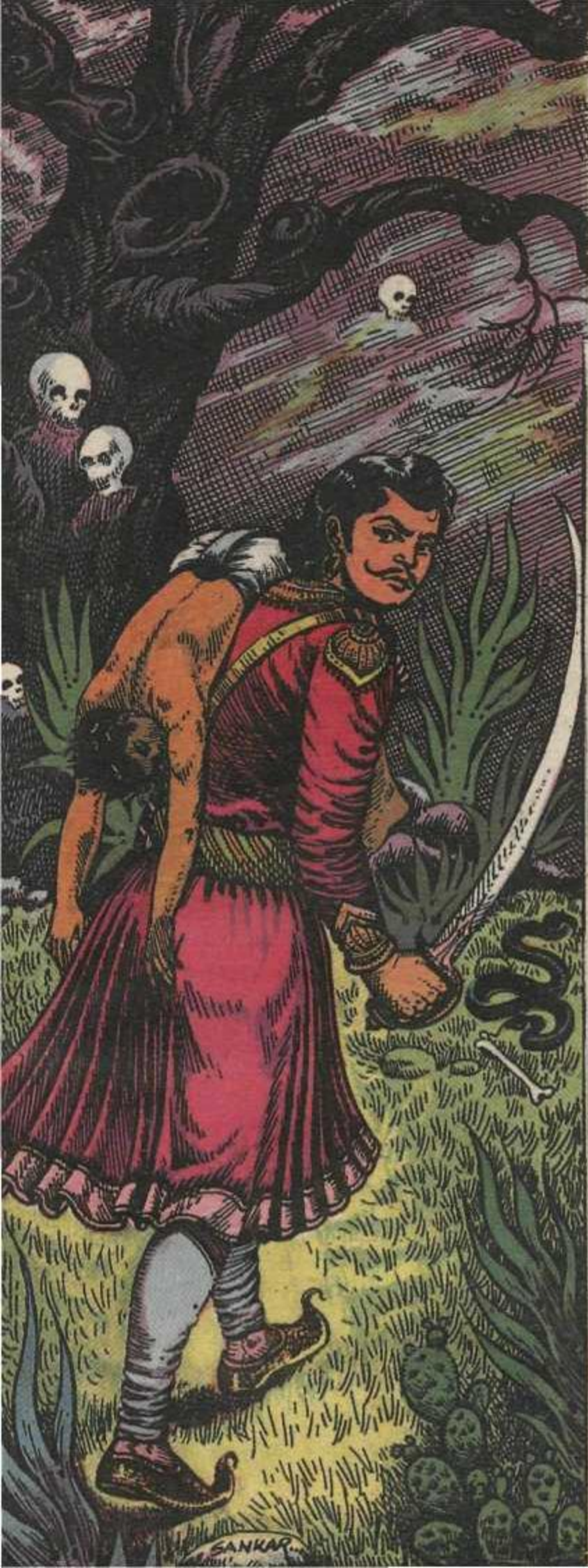
"The shining water that moves in the streams is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must teach your children that it is sacred – that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of memories in the lives of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

"We know the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next – for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs.

"He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold, like bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind a desert...

"Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. The end of living and the beginning of survival." – Chief Seattle, 1854.





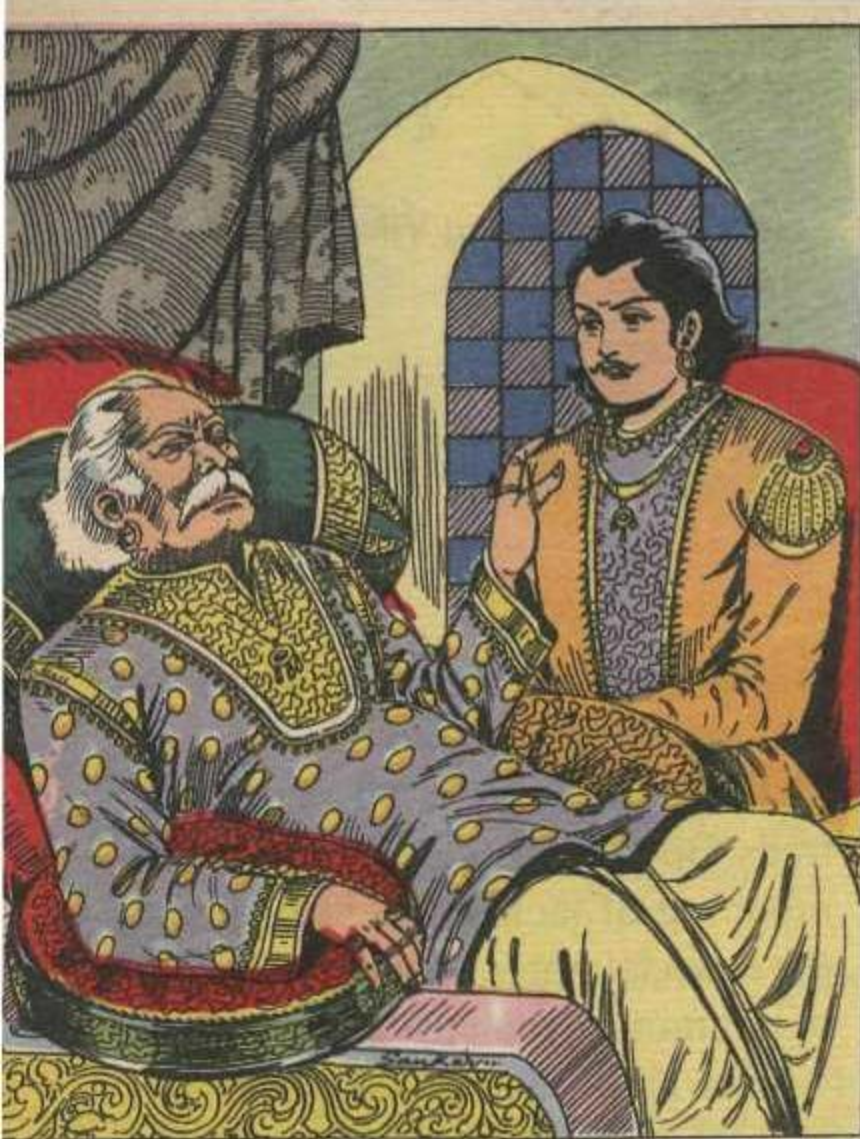
New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

The Right Choice

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Why are you so adamant? Have you forsaken your family to pursue your mission? Have you promised something to your parents? Listen to the story of Jayapal; you'll then realise the futility of your mission!"





The vampire then began his narration.

Jayapuri was once ruled by Jayapal. He was getting old and his health was failing. He became bedridden and he felt his end was near. He sent for his son Veersimha. "I may not get up from my bed again, my son!" he told the prince. "I may die soon, though I wish I could live for some more years. I still love the pleasures of life. So, I want you to promise me that you won't burn my body. You must embalm it and preserve my body in a wooden coffin. Some day some great sage may pass this way and give me life again. If

that happens, then I can live on the earth for some more years. You must fulfil this my dying wish."

Prince Veersimha took his father's hands in his and made a solemn promise. Before a month went by, King Jayapal passed away. Veersimha arranged for embalming the body, which was then laid in a sandalwood coffin. He thus obeyed his father's command and fulfilled his last wish.

Veersimha had his formal coronation and soon afterwards he also married Tilottama, the daughter of the King of Dheerapuri. She was not only beautiful but good-natured, too. In due time, she was to become a mother. King Veersimha called an astrologer, who examined the queen's horoscope. "The queen will give birth to a son, but there are indications that the baby may die of snake poison before its birth!"

"Shall I order for all the snakes in the land to be exterminated?" Veersimha queried. The astrologer was silent. "Shall I ask my people to rear mongoose in every house?" The astrologer was still silent. As he did not raise any objection, the king ordered that every house should rear mongoose. The king's men went about catching snakes and killing



them. Soon, no single snake could be seen in Jayapuri. Veersimha himself kept a pet—a vulture—which would always perch itself on the queen's shoulders. The king thus made it certain that the queen did not come to any harm.

On a full moon night, Tilottama asked her husband, "There's lovely moonlight; shall we go and spend some time in the garden?" Veersimha agreed. They both went into the garden and enjoyed the moonlight and cool breeze for a long time.

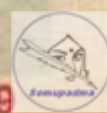
The vulture sitting on the queen's shoulders suddenly flew into a tree in the garden on which it had seen a snake. It caught the snake and carried it by its claws away into the sky. But the snake freed itself and, as it dropped down, it fell on the queen's shoulders and bit her on the neck.

Tilottama got up with a shriek. Veersimha helped her get into the palace and made her lie down. He then sent for the royal physician. Before he arrived, the poison had spread all over and Tilottama died. She was very dear to Veersimha. He could not imagine a life without her. He did not wish to cremate her. So, just as he did with his father's body, he embalmed the queen's body and preserved it in a sandalwood coffin.



Some days later, a sage arrived in Jayapuri on his way from the Himalayas. People talked about him as one who had acquired a lot of power and strength by deep meditation for several days. Veersimha sent word that he wished to meet him. Soon after he called on the sage.

"I know what you wish to tell me. Death is a natural event. Once born, man has to die some time. Nobody can escape death. If anyone were to beat death, it will only lead to more and more disaster. You did not cremate your father's body but tried to preserve it in a sandalwood coffin.



See how it has harmed your family! Your wife has died of snake-bite. Hers was a premature death. If you cremate your father's body, the queen will regain her life."

Veersimha listened to the sage intently. He thought for a while and said, "You're supposed to have acquired great powers. Can't you invoke those powers and give back life to my father as well as my wife?"

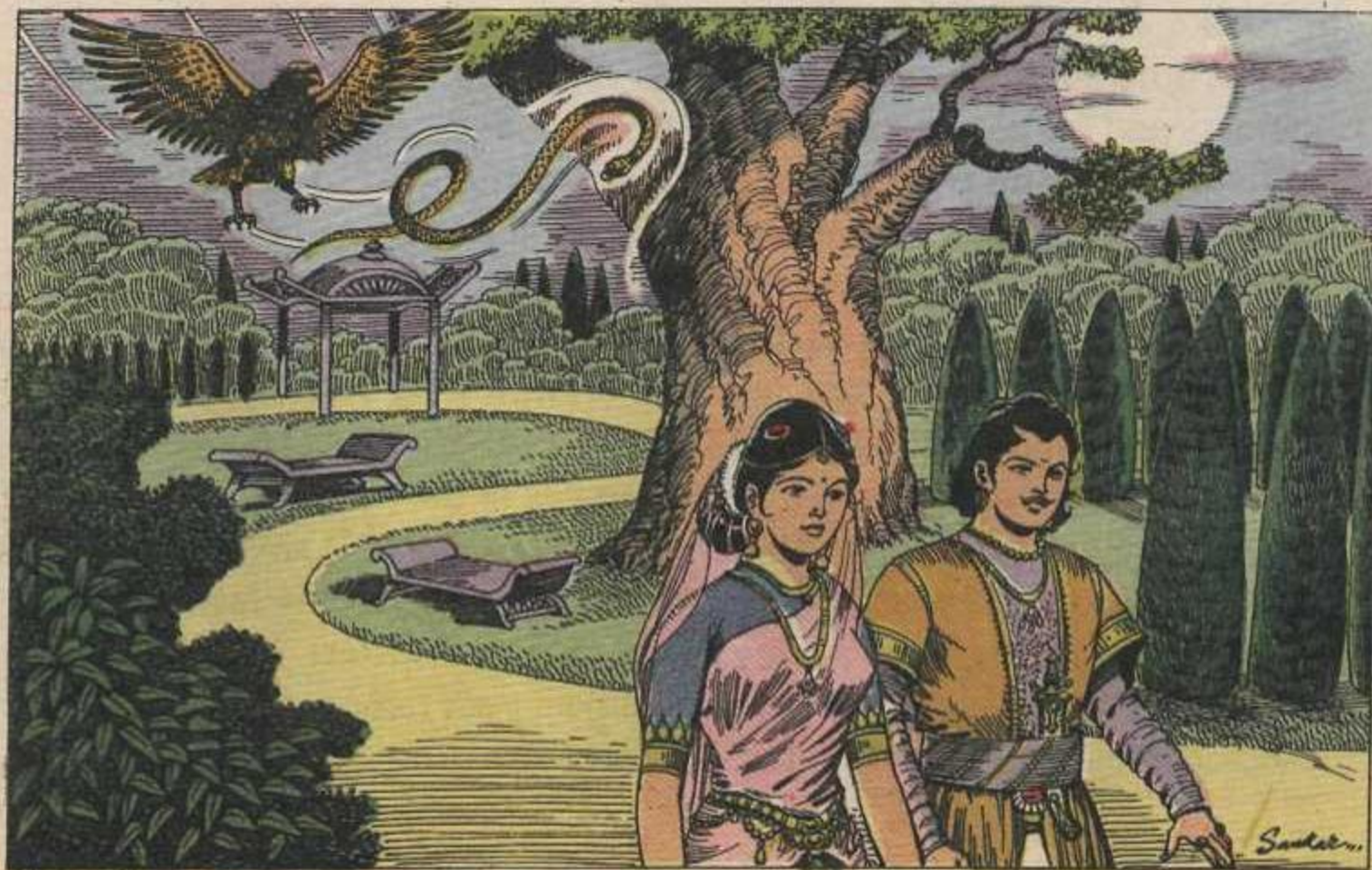
The sage smiled at him. "Such things are not so simple as you believe. Even if I use all my powers, I can at the most achieve only one thing. I may be able to give back life to only one of them—not both. And only if you so insist will I attempt to

do even that. Now you've a choice: is it to be your father or your wife?"

Veersimha did not think for long. "Please give me back my father!" he pleaded.

"You're clever and wise, O King!" said the sage. "You seem to have considered all aspects before you made your choice. Perhaps by your decision, you can get back the lives of three persons!" The sage blessed him and sent him back to the palace.

The vampire concluded his story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "Don't you think the sage was contradicting himself? He said he could give back life to only



one person. Veersimha wanted his father to come back to life. The sage then complimented him for making a wise choice, and remarked that he was giving life back to three persons. Veersimha knew that only by cremating his father would he get back his wife. Why didn't he ask the sage to give back life to his wife? Why did he ask for his father's life? Was it correct? Only two persons had died—the king's father, and his wife. Then why did the sage mention three lives? Whom did he mean as the third person? O King! If you know all the answers and still prefer to keep silent, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!" the vampire

warned him.

Vikramaditya had ready answers. He said, "There's no doubt Veersimha loved both his father and his wife equally. That was why he preserved their bodies. The sage told him that his wife had died a premature death because the father's body had not been cremated. That meant, if Jayapal got back his life, then automatically the queen also would regain her life. The king realised this after deep thought. If the sage could give back life to only one person, he decided it should be his father, because if he got back his life, then that would lead to Tilottama getting back her life. The third life



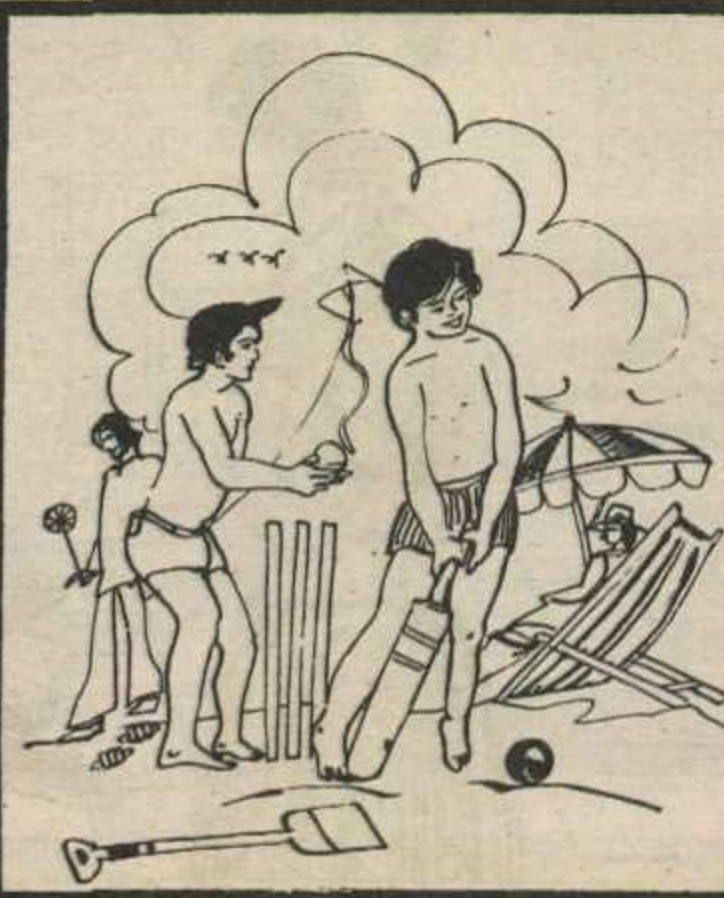


referred to by the sage was the baby in the womb. If the queen were to live, the baby too would live and be born in due time."

The vampire knew that the king

was too smart for him and he flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



Chandamama Supplement-68

COMMON TREES OF INDIA

The tree with the largest fruit

Do you know—which is the largest edible fruit in the world? Jack-fruit. It can be as long as 90 cm. (almost 3ft) and 40 cm thick. The tree that gives us this fruit is commonly called Jack. In Marathi, it is called *phanas*, and in Sanskrit *panas*, but the popular name in the south Indian languages, *chakka*, seems to have inspired the English name—Jack!

The Greek historian, Theophrastus (300 B.C.) is reported have written about "the very large tree, bearing wonderfully sweet and large fruit, eaten by the sages of India". The Italian traveller of the 14th century A.D., Marignolli, compared the size of the fruit to that of a lamb.

This evergreen tree, which does not grow very tall (average 15m), is considered a native of the Western Ghats. Though not very common, the tree can be found in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam as well. One cannot see plantations of Jack; the tree is grown mainly for the shade it provides. Trees growing in sandy soil yield larger-sized fruits than those grown in hard soil.

The leaves, elliptic in shape, are large, thick, leathery, and a glossy green. The flowers, which appear at the end of the cold season, are enclosed in yellow sheaths which soon fall off. They grow at the end of branches or on the trunk away from the leaves. They give out a sweet smell—like the fruit when ripe. When tender, the fruits are green but turn yellow and then a dark brown. They are oblong or round in shape, and may weigh anything between 20 and 30 kg. The edible part of the fruit will have white seeds inside. The skin of the fruit

is rough and thick, covered with several sharp, conical studs. The season for Jack-fruit starts in March and extends to June. Where the monsoon is delayed, the fruit may be available till September. The raw fruit is used in curries and is also fried. The fruit lends itself to a variety of delicacies.

Jackwood is used for furniture, doors, and windows. When cut, the timber looks yellow, but it turns dark, and when polished, it is almost like mahogany.





BOOKS BEHIND GREAT FAITHS

THE KORAN

Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born in 570 A.D. in Mecca, the Arabian city hallowed by his name. He took to trade and moved with caravans in his early youth, but soon realised that he was destined for a great work, that God had chosen him for conveying His message to the people. He received a series of revelations – instructions for a just and religious life – which are compiled in the Koran.

The term Islam is rendered as 'Submission' (to God). It is also rendered as 'Peace'. Perhaps the broad meaning, is obtaining peace through a submission to God. One who follows the faith of Islam is a Muslim.

The Koran is the sacred book for the Muslims and it emphasises that God is one. He is all-pervading. "The East and the West belong to Allah. Whichever way you go you will find Him. He is omnipresent and omniscient," it declares. The spirit of surrender to God is evident in the very first passage of the Koran. It reads, in simple English rendering:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful:

Glory to Allah, Lord of all Existence,

Compassionate and Merciful,

Master of the Day of Judgment,

We worship Thee alone

And to Thee alone we pray for help.

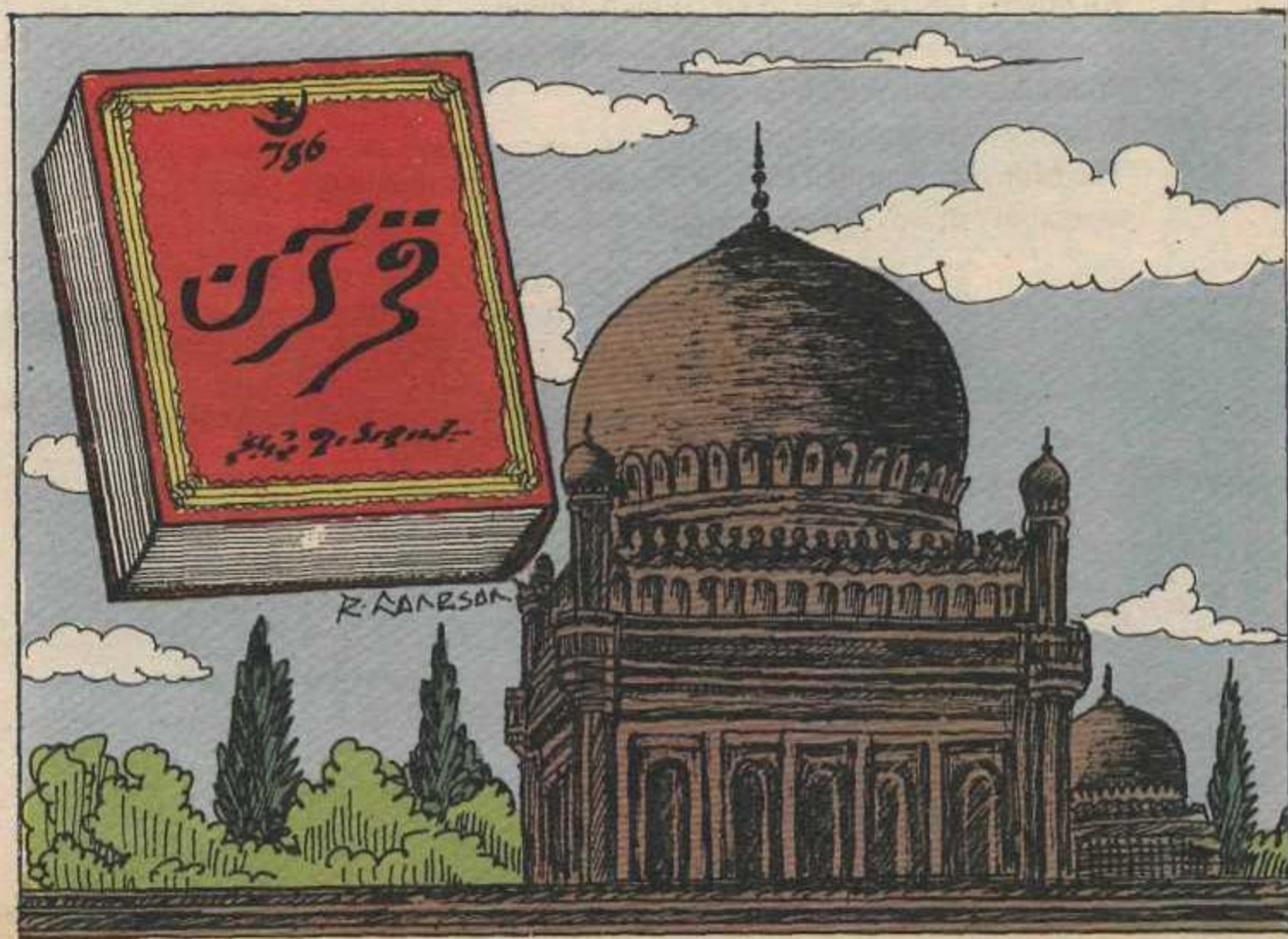
Guide us along the straight path,

*The path of Thine blessed followers,
Not of those who have displeased Thee
Not of those who have gone astray.*

The Koran gives great importance to seeking knowledge and to justice. About the first, it instructs:

*From the cradle right up to the grave,
never cease to seek knowledge.*

A contemporary Indian scholar, Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer, points out: "No religion in the world seeks to promote hatred, conflict or fanaticism. In fact, religions are needed precisely to fight these evils. Every religion, in its own unique way, contributes towards promotion of love, justice and peace which Islam also does. There are some verses in the Koran which advocate retaliatory violence against the aggressing *kuffar* of Mecca and those who collaborated with them. These verses should be seen in a historical context. Their applicability was strictly contextual, not normative, unlike what is often made out."



DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who was independent Kenya's first Prime Minister and President?
2. Which is the largest city in India?
3. An island in the Mediterranean is like a triangle in shape. Which island?
4. One of the Indonesian islands is known as the Island of a Thousand Temples. Which one?
5. Which country in the world is the loftiest?
6. Which animal has three hearts?
7. When was the Berlin Wall constructed? When was it brought down?
8. Ayudhya was once the capital city of a country in south-east Asia. Which country?
9. What was the name of Abraham Lincoln's wife?
10. Once a husband and wife jointly ruled England. Who were they?
11. Which city in the world has the largest population?
12. Which was the first capital of the U.S.A., before Washington?
13. An animal has no teeth at all. Which animal?
14. Barcelona is a Spanish city. It is also the name of a town in a country is South America. Which country?
15. Where was potato first grown?
16. The Manyara National Park in Tanzania has the maximum number of an animal in Africa. Which animal?

Answers :

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Jomo Kenyatta | 16. The elephant |
| 2. Calcutta | 15. South America |
| 3. Sicily | 14. Venezuela |
| 4. Bali | 13. The anteater. It licks food with its tongue. |
| 5. Switzerland | 12. Philadelphia was the capital from 1790 to 1800, when the capital was shifted to Washington. |
| 6. The sea animal called cuttlefish | 11. The Chinese city of Shanghai |
| 7. The Berlin Wall, to separate East Germany from West Germany, was built in 1961. It was brought down in 1989, resulting in the unification of Germany. | 10. William III and Mary II (from 1689 to 1694) |
| 8. Thailand (old name Siam) | 9. Mary Todd |



MASTER OF THE WIND

Long long ago there lived a good and righteous king. He loved his subjects and wanted to find out how clever and wise they were. In fact, he was looking for someone who could be his close advisor. So, in consultation with his ministers, a scheme was made to test the intelligence of the people.

The following day at the crossroads of the city stood soldiers with specific instructions from their master. They arrested the first passer-by. He was a rich merchant.

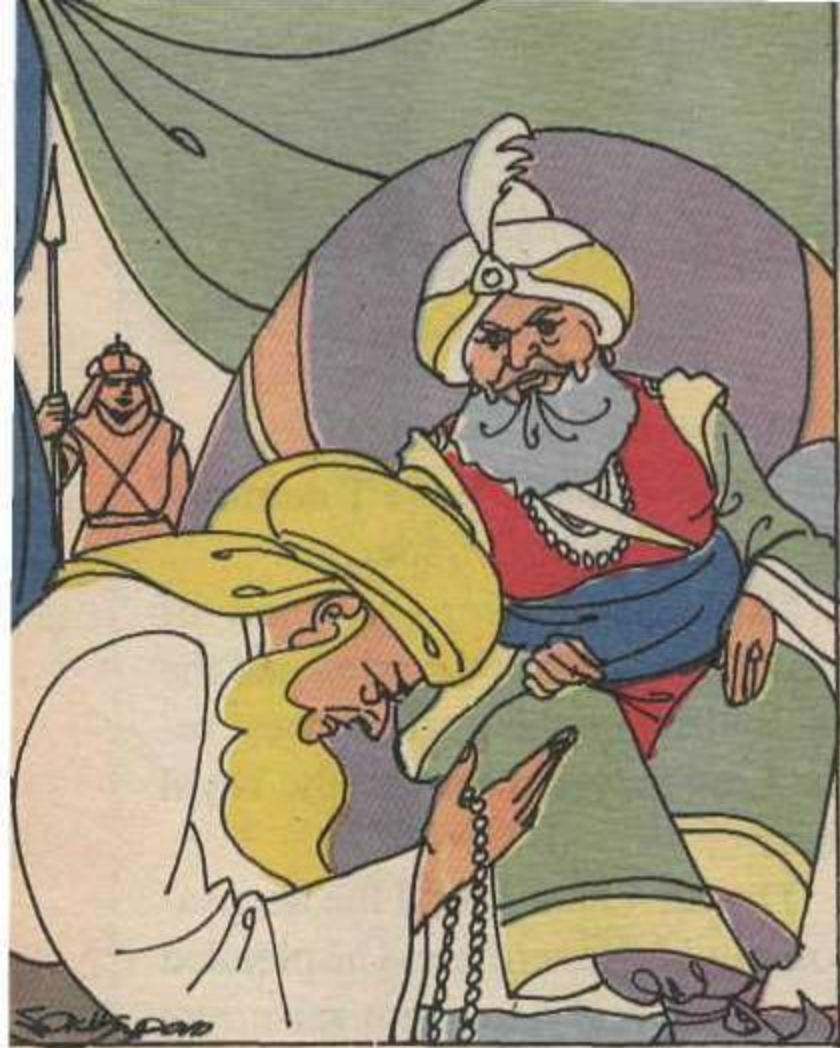
"What blunder have I committed?" protested the trader.

"You have been accused of stealing the king of the wind and the air encircling the earth!" they replied, as they led him to the royal court.

The merchant found the accusation stupid. Nevertheless he pleaded for mercy and dared not raise any objection to the decree of the king, whatever it might be!

"Imagine, the air and the wind are all yours for a month! Do what





you please with them and then come and report back to me," said the king, after ordering the guards to release the prisoner.

Four weeks passed by. The merchant returned to the palace. "O King!" he implored. "Forgive me. I have failed to carry out your wishes. Alas, how can I? The moment I try to blow into my palm and trap the air, it just disappears into nothing!"

The king forgave the trader and sent him off.

The next day the soldiers caught hold of a priest, charging him with the same offence. When brought before the king, he fell at his feet and

begged for mercy. The king released him, urging him to make use of the wind and the air at his disposal and to report back in two months time.

Sixty days passed and a trembling priest appeared before the king. "Your Majesty, day and night I have been praying to God to show me some way to carry out your orders. Alas, I am still waiting to get an answer," he said, with tears in his eyes.

"All right, my good man, you may go now and attend to your duties," said the king gently.

Day after day, many citizens, young and old, rich and poor, wise and simple, were charged with the same offence and brought before the king. But none could succeed in fulfilling the royal bidding.

"Isn't there a single man in my vast realm, wise and clever enough to bridle the wind?" sadly wondered His Majesty.

One day the soldiers brought a poor shepherd before him. He did not seem to be worried at all of the offence he was being charged with. Instead, he calmly said, "Indeed, O King! You are the lord of the wind and the air encircling this earth! I am prepared to undergo any punishment you deem fit for me for stealing a



little of your air and wind to breathe and cool myself."

The king was much impressed at the courage of the poor shepherd lad.

"You seem to be a brave boy!" said he with a smile. "You are given three months to make substantial use of the wind and the air around you. After the end of the period, come and tell me what you have done with them."

The young shepherd fell into a thoughtful reverie. He then said with a twinkle in his eyes, "Your Majesty, I require three things to carry out your bidding."

"What are they?" asked the king, sounding interested.

"I request Your Highness to officially authorise me to own the wind and the air for this period of time," demanded the shepherd.

"So will it be. What are your other requirements?"

"Since I will be appointed the master of the wind and the air, I must be arrayed in the most befitting apparel too!" proposed the lad.

"Indeed! Indeed!" exclaimed the king and his ministers.

"It will be impossible," continued the shepherd, "to carry out such a noble assignment without a



proper office and host of efficient assistants."

All the demands of the shepherd boy were fulfilled to the letter. But before he took his leave, the king warned him, "Mind you, young man, if you fail to accomplish the task satisfactorily, you will be banished from the land."

News about the poor shepherd boy spread far and wide. People curiously gathered in front of his palatial office. Their eyes widened when they saw the lad who once wore tattered clothes, now dressed in the most gorgeous of apparels, mounting a white horse and fol-





lowed by a host of attendants.

Said the shepherd, "By the order of the king, the wind and the air around you belong to me. Here is the letter of authority with the royal seal."

"Yes, yes, indeed! The air and the wind are all yours, but what are you going to do with them?" asked someone in the crowd.

One of the shepherd's assistants stood up on a platform and with the beating of the drum made an announcement. "Hear! O People of this kingdom! From this day onwards, you have to pay tax to our master for the air you breathe and

the breeze you enjoy!"

"What!" exclaimed the gathering in a chorus.

"Yes. That's what you must do. And, each one must pay for himself or herself, for you breathe personally, not through your servants or representatives. I make exception only for the infants," said the shepherd.

Alas! What else could they do, but pay? For indeed the air and the wind belonged to the shepherd.

So all lined up from dawn till evening, every day for three long months, to pay their dues. The king, the queen and the beautiful princess were also not spared and they joined the queue.

The king was indeed in a dilemma. But he was known for his righteousness! How could he revoke his own decree?

The blowing of the trumpets and the jewellers' bellows, the unfurling of the sails of the ships, and the use of all things big and small, associated with the air, the breeze, and the wind, were strictly prohibited without the payment of proper levies in the shepherd's magnificent office.

Scores of assistants worked all day long and well into the midnight. They collected the tax, issued re-





ceipts, and maintained a thorough account of all the transactions.

Soon the period passed and everyone gave a sigh of relief, including the royal family. The shepherd presented himself before the king and surrendered all the money he had collected in three months to the very last coin and submitted stacks of account books.

"My Lord," he said with a graceful bow, "allow me now to return to my humble dwelling in the hills."

"No, that's impossible!" answered the king, pretending to be angry. "You are going to stay imprisoned here in my palace!"

"But, Your Majesty, what wrong have I done? I have made the most profitable use of the wind and the air and enriched the royal treasury!" asked the youth, rather surprised.

"You are appointed forthwith my close advisor and will live with me in the palace," said the king, very happy that at least one modest man in his realm was clever enough to outwit him.

It was not before long that the poor shepherd boy married the beautiful princess and succeeded the old king to the throne.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das

No man is without enemies.

Little pigeons can carry great messages.



THE WORLD OF NATURE

Not a fox, this

Heard of foxes that fly? Never, you'll say, and you're right, because flying foxes are really bats which have a face like that of the fox. They are also known as the Malayan Fruit-bat. They are commonly found in the jungles of Malaysia and their favourite food comprises soft fruits. It is interesting to watch them eat the fruits manipulating them with their wings. The wing span can extend to as much as 4ft (nearly 1.20 metres). As fruit is their main food, these bats can be easily domesticated. A large bird-cage will be needed in the initial stages, but once the bird is tamed, it will not fly away. Like all bats, they too prefer to hang upside down!



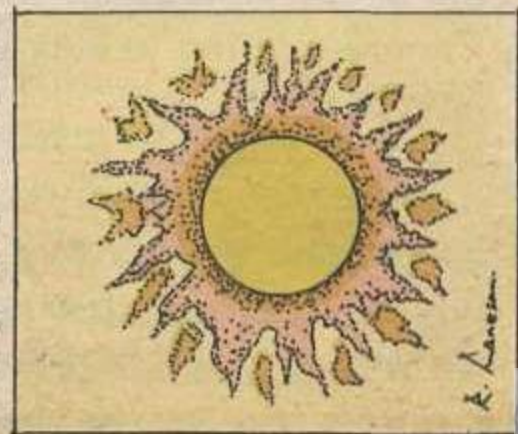
Harmful mushrooms

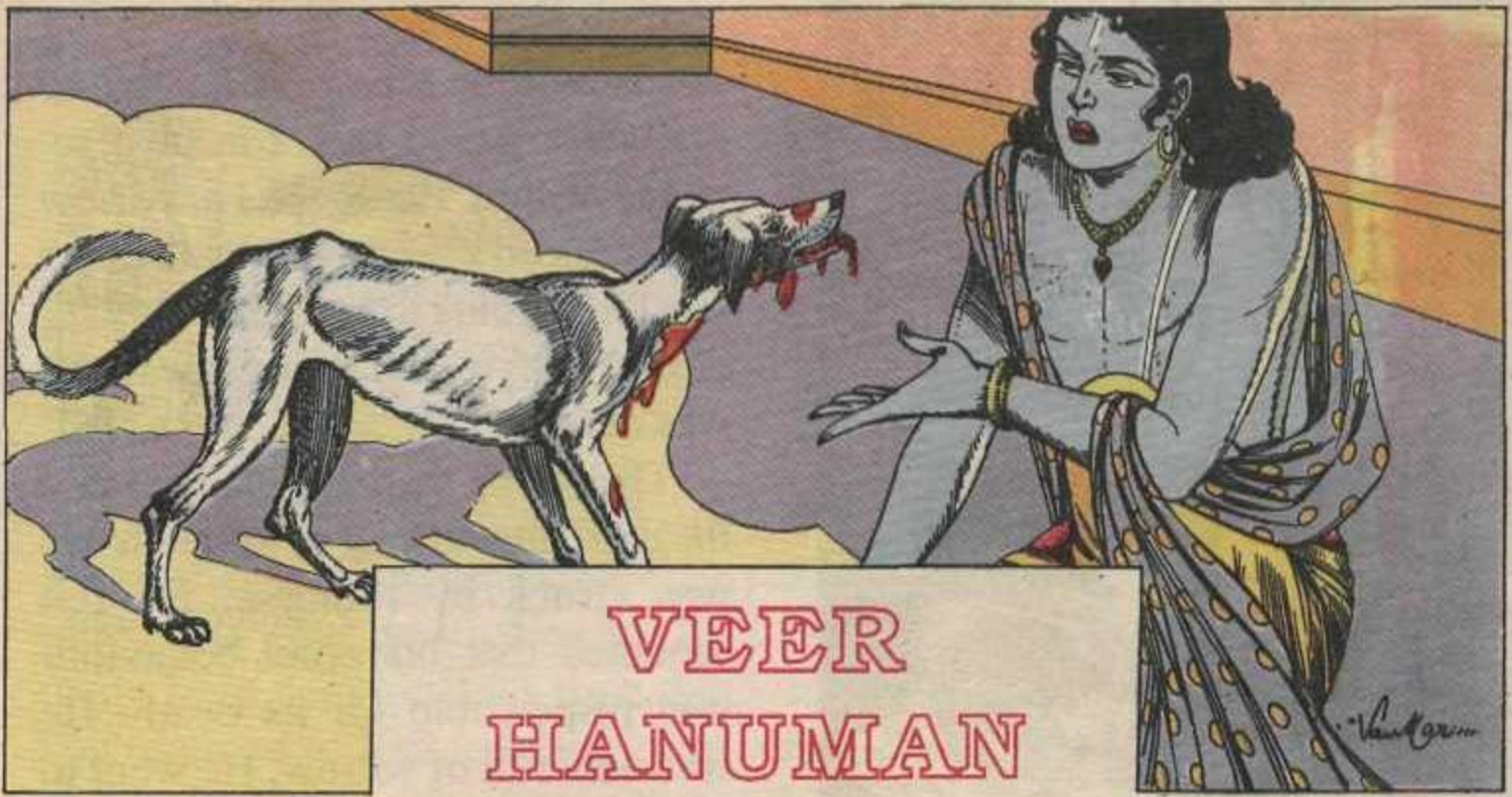
Most plants need light to grow. Mushrooms are plants that do not need any light. If you take a walk in your garden, early morning, you will be surprised to see mushrooms sprung up where you would not have seen them the previous evening. You are attracted and would like to pick them. Tarry awhile; ensure that they are really mushrooms and are not toadstools. They are a kind of mushroom, but are poisonous and by merely touching them, you will get an itching sensation that may develop into a serious illness. Farmers and agricultural experts can distinguish safe mushrooms from those that cause harm. Better be careful when you pick mushrooms.



Death of the sun

Can you imagine a day when the sun will be devoid of hydrogen at its centre? The nuclear reactions caused then will spread outwards to the regions around the sun's core. It will produce more energy and swell up into a giant red star. When the sun thus becomes bigger and brighter, the earth will be reduced to ashes. Soon afterwards, the sun will assume a size a hundred times larger than now and drift into space like a smoke ring. Have you already started running for your life? Wait. All this are predicted (by scientists) to happen a *few thousand million years* from now. You will not live to see the sun's death.





VEER HANUMAN

(45)

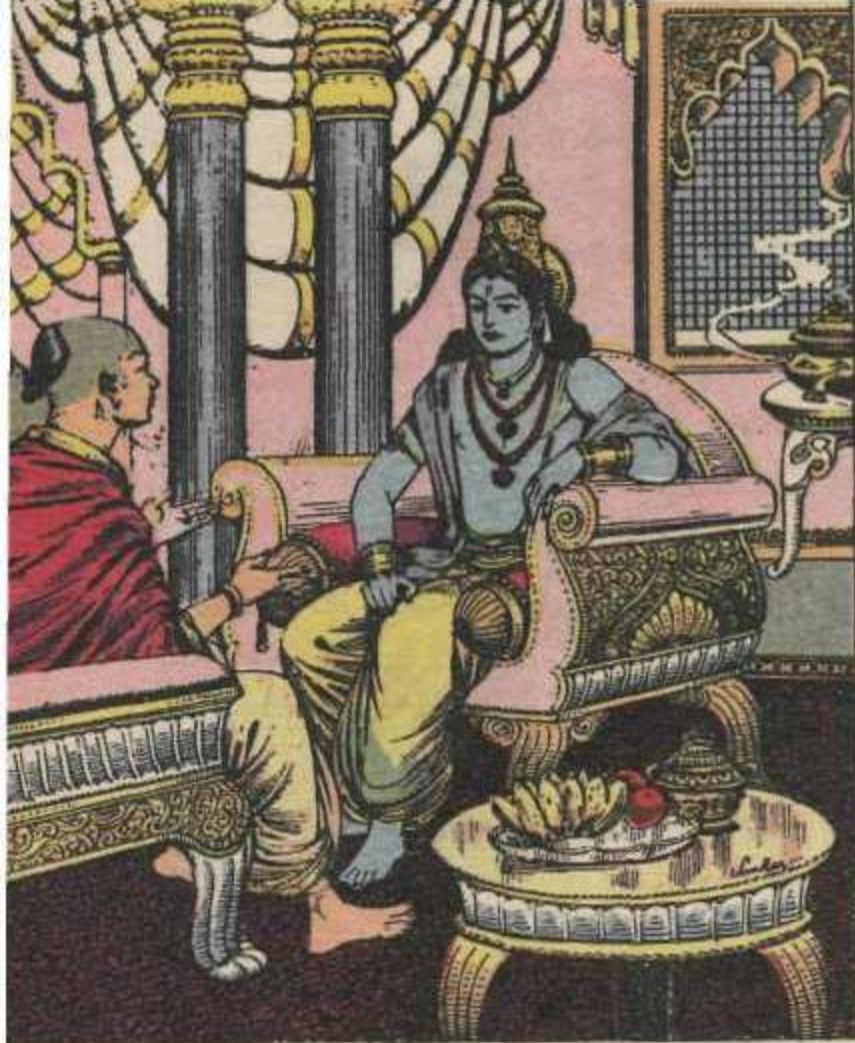
Rama sends Hanuman to be of assistance to his brothers to get the yaga horse released in Manipuri. King Manidhwaja ill-treats Lakshmana's emissary. A war starts. Manidhwaja invokes the blessings of Lord Siva. Even His weapons cannot help Manidhwaja. The Lord himself comes down to fight on behalf of his devotee. He opens his Third eye. Hanuman swallows the fire that emanates from the Lord, who turns to Manidhwaja and tells him that Hanuman is really a part of Him. The king releases the horse and goes to Ayodhya, and offers his daughters to Lava and Kusa.

During Rama's rule, anyone in Ayodhya could go to his palace and seek redressal of any grievance. He had given this freedom and privilege to everybody in his kingdom. One day, a dog was found at the palace gates barking and wailing. It carried wounds all over its body, and blood was oozing from them.

Rama heard the dog's barks and came out to enquire. He stroked its body softly and affectionately. The animal found it soothing and it stopped barking. "O King! Someone hurt me very badly, and cruelly. He appears to be a vagabond, without any regular work. Please be kind enough to appoint him caretaker of a temple."

END OF AN INCARNATION





Wasn't Rama surprised? The dog was pleading on behalf of somebody who had bodily harmed him, instead of seeking his punishment! Rama decided to find out the truth from the dog itself. On his asking for details, the dog answered thus: "O King! In my previous birth I was in charge of a temple. I was tempted to steal the temple treasures and other properties. I was also cruel to people. I paid for those sins by being born as a dog. I wish the person who had harmed me be given the charge of a temple because then, he too will be tempted to rob the temple of its valuables. When he commits such a

sin, he will be reborn as a dog like me. That way, I too can take revenge on him. However, I have now experienced your affectionate touch and I'll be going to heaven." The dog closed its eyes and Rama saw that it was dead.

The young man who had harmed the dog came to hear of its death. He was struck by remorse. He felt ashamed that his cruel behaviour was responsible for its death. He was now full of sorrow. He went to Rama and apologised for his behaviour. When Rama saw that the man's regret was genuine and sincere, he let him go with a piece of advice. Rama was happy that he could dispense justice equally to everybody.

Ashwamedha yaga was over by now. There was no single kingdom which had not accepted the suzerainty of Ayodhya. Its flag fluttered from all corners of the land. One day, Rama had a visitor. He was none other than Yamadharma. The king, however, had reached Ayodhya in the disguise of a Brahmin. On his meeting Rama, he said, "I wish to speak to you in confidence. And when we talk, ensure that nobody comes into the room. If anyone were to disturb us, then he should be



beheaded!"

Rama thought that the demand was rather strange, but he agreed to everything. He called Lakshmana and directed him not to let in anybody till he had finished talking to the Brahmin. "If anyone disturbs us, see that he is beheaded!"

"Rama! You're really Lord Vishnu," began Yamadharma. "The purpose of your incarnation has already been achieved. It's time that you returned to Vaikunta – the seat of Vishnu. Don't delay going there along with your brothers."

While they were talking, the sage Durvasa arrived there. "I must meet Rama, immediately," he told

Lakshmana, who was guarding the palace doors. "My brother has a visitor; you must wait for his convenience," said Lakshmana. But the sage was not willing to wait even for a moment. "That's impossible! I must meet him right now!" he shouted.

Lakshmana once again told Durvasa that he would have to wait. The sage, whose anger everybody was afraid of, was furious. "I shall curse everybody in Rama's household; there won't be anyone left in his dynasty!" he warned.

As the sage's power to curse was legendary, Lakshmana decided that it would be advisable to inform Rama of the presence of Durvasa in





Ayodhya. In utter disregard of his brother's directions, Lakshmana went in where Rama was in conversation with the Brahmin. The moment he went there, the Brahmin mysteriously disappeared.

Rama was angry with Lakshmana for having disobeyed his orders. And when he realised that he had to keep his promise to the Brahmin by beheading his own brother, he was overcome by grief. But he had no choice. He ordered that Lakshmana be beheaded.

When the news spread, everybody was flabbergasted. How could Rama be so cruel to his own brother,

who had kept him company and fought by his side to defeat Ravana? All the elders went up to Rama, with the plea that he took back his order. Rama was in a dilemma. And when Lakshmana came to know of his brother's predicament, he decided to end his life by jumping into the swollen Sarayu river. Soon, he reached Vaikunta and proclaimed Rama's sense of Justice to everybody.

Days passed. Rama sent for Bharata and Shatrughna and asked them to arrange for the coronation of Lava and Kusa. Soon their coronation took place with great pomp and splendour. Rama then called for Hanuman. "I'm entrusting my sons to you, Hanuman. You must look after them, just as you had served me all these years. See that they rule the land in such a way that the fame of Ramarajya will spread far and wide."

Rama then started for the Sarayu. Chanting of *veda mantras* was heard everywhere. The sound of musical instruments reverberated from every corner. Bharata and Shatrughna walked behind Rama, one of them holding an umbrella aloft and the other fanning him. People followed the three brothers. They showered



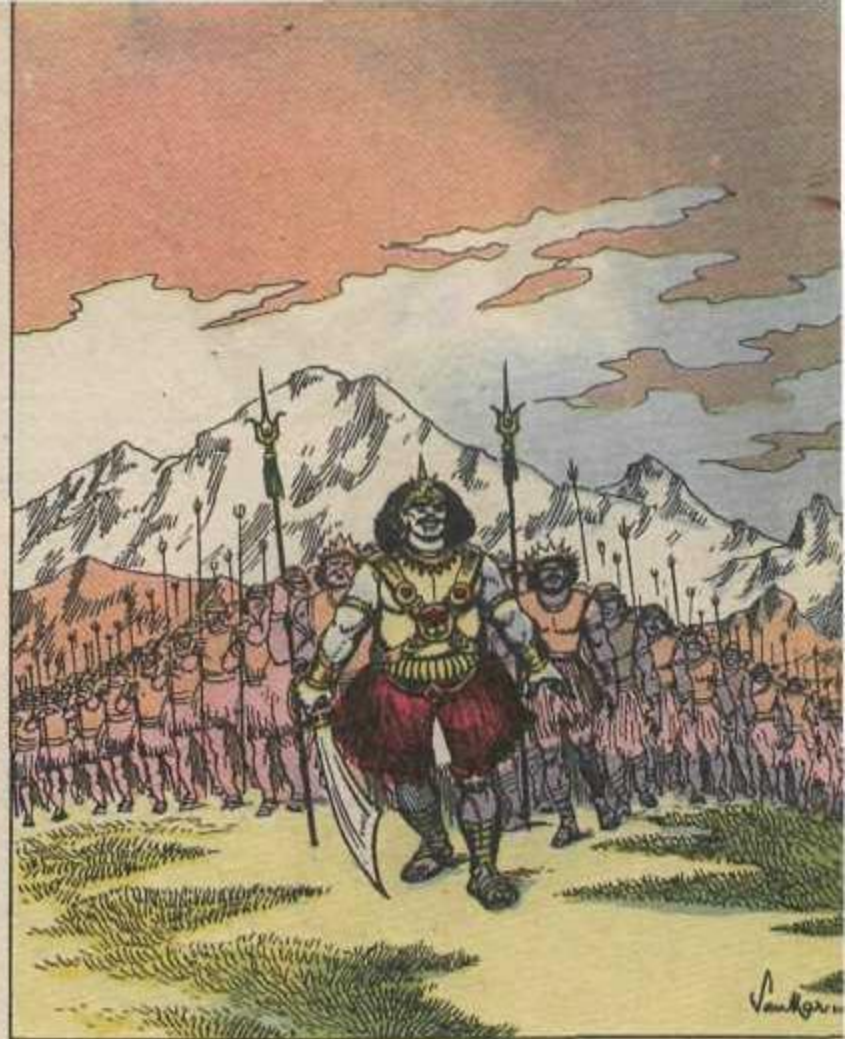
flower petals on all three of them. Hanuman, too, followed the brothers. However, none of them knew what was in Rama's mind, or why he was heading towards the river. They all halted on the banks of Sarayu and anxiously watched Rama.

He entered the river and walked some distance in the water. Bharata blew the conch in his hands. He followed right behind Rama. Shatrughna followed his elder brothers like a shadow. Rama stopped walking and turned round. He raised his hands and blessed all those who were standing on the banks of the river. "All of you must now go back home!" he said.

Hanuman, who was standing next to Lava and Kusa, said, "My Lord! Without you, what is life for me?" he wailed aloud. "I shall end my life in your very presence!" He then got ready to jump into the river.

"Hanuman! You've no death! You'll live for ever!" said Rama, pacifying him. "Have you forgotten what I told you about Lava and Kusa? Don't you think you must obey my orders? You must not be overcome by emotion and commit any indiscretion. Please accompany them back to Ayodhya!"

Rama then turned again and went



forward till he could not be seen above the water. Bharata and Shatrughna followed him and they, too, disappeared beneath the waters of Sarayu. That was the end of the incarnation of Vishnu as Rama.

Lakshmana received his brothers when they reached Vaikunta. He had by then assumed the form of the divine serpent Adishesha. Rama assumed the form of Vishnu and once again lay on his mount, Adishesha. Bharata and Shatrughna became Vishnu's conch and the *chakra*. And Sita joined them as goddess Lakshmi.

One day, Lava and Kusa were





sitting on the throne. They remembered their parents and suddenly began shedding tears. Hanuman pacified them. "You both have been born in Raghu's dynasty. How can you become so weak-hearted? What'll happen to the kingdom? In the absence of Rama, it is left to his sons to keep up the prestige and fame of the kingdom. If ever you wish to see your parents, just tell me, I shall show them to you. They're very much here, in my heart. They live in my heart, always." He then bared his chest and showed them that what he said was true. Lava and Kusa then saw both Rama and Sita

blessing them. They were consoled.

All of a sudden, Ayodhya faced an attack by a Rakshasa called Ghorakali. He and his followers, named Kushanars and Pashanars, reached the kingdom and began attacking the people. They came from the northwest regions and in no time the western portions of Ayodhya were overrun by them. Soon they were joined by more demons led by Kalakali and Kalakeya. They plundered the areas they tread and collected whatever treasures they could get. They took them to an island called Kalakuda.

People from all those areas ran for their lives. Some of them reached the capital and soon word came to Lava and Kusa. While they arranged for their shelter, Hanuman went about organising an army and trained them how to fight the demons. When they were ready for the fight, they were like a thousand Hanumans.

One of the soldiers, Guha, fought with Ghorakali and killed him. Kalakali and Kalakeya were unable to resist the onslaught from the Ayodhya army. They ran away and took refuge in the sea.

In the face of disaster and tragedy, it was the people's devotion to Rama that made them remain united, and







Hanuman was responsible for that. He infused courage in them, evoked mutual cooperation, and encouraged friendship among the people. A sense of patriotism flowed through their veins. They were ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their country.

Lava and Kusa wished to commemorate their victory over the demons and the unity among their subjects. Lava built a city – Lavan-tika, and Kusa built Kusavati. Both Lava and Kusa ruled well and ruled for many years. Hanuman was both contented and happy over the way they preserved the fame and name of Ramarajya. He thought that the

brothers might not need his services any longer and decided to go back to the Gandhamadana mountain.

He informed Lava and Kusa of his decision. Both of them, along with their families and entourage, accompanied Hanuman upto the Gandhamadana ranges. Everybody chanted "Long live Hanuman!" several times, and loud and louder. He blessed all of them, and moved on to the mountain. The sage Narada appeared before him and said, "The *Dwapara yuga* has now started. When it enters its fourth period, you'll be able to see Sree Rama!" Narada then disappeared.

– To conclude

Say well, or be still.

To hope and strive is the way to thrive.

LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT

When two 'kings' met...

One day, poet Subramania Bharati and wife Chellammal had taken their younger daughter, Sakuntala, to the zoo. They stood before the lion's cage. Suddenly, Bharati went very close to the iron railings, while the mother and daughter watched with bated breath. Bharati called out: "The King of Poetry wishes to greet the King of the Jungle!" The lion responded with a loud roar. Bharati put his hand inside and affectionately stroked the animal! It was really an extraordinary sight.

Not surprisingly, Bharati would always remark that all living beings are the loving creation of the Almighty and all – animals and human beings – are equal in His eyes.

Theirs was not an affluent family, and Bharati often found it difficult to make both ends meet. One evening, Chellammal was cleaning a handful of rice – the last handful she then had – for their supper. Bharati sat next to her in the verandah admiring the birds flying back to their homes. Some of them were flitting about in the verandah expecting something to peck at before retiring for the day. Chellammal left the tray of rice on the floor and went inside to put



water to boil. When she came back, she was greeted by the sight of her husband joyously feeding the birds with the grains from the tray!

The poet was a great lover of Nature and everything vibrant in Nature. Even when he was a Primary School student, Subramania – affectionately called Subbiah at home – was fond of making rhymes. The moment he came from school, he

would throw his slate in one corner and go out and roam about admiring Nature. Once when he got back home, his angry father, who wished to make him a mathematics genius, roared at him: "Have you done your sums?" Subbiah came out with a rhyme: "Sums are as dumb as gum/They're numb and they hum."

When he was eleven, he had accompanied his father to the court of the Rajah of Ettayapuram. He was told of the boy's craze for poetry and was promptly asked to recite some of his poems. A few prominent poets, who were in the *darbar* at that time, called him 'Bharati' – another name for Saraswati, the goddess of Learning. From that day, he came to be known as Subramania Bharati.



Mallan's revenge

Mallan was the son of a poor farmer. He was lazy and good-for-nothing. He would not go for work. On the pretext of searching for work, he would merely roam the place. His father brought him up with great difficulty. He would often advise him to go for work, but soon found that there was no way to reform him. He himself took him along to plead with his friends to give him some work. But whosoever knew Mallan was not willing to give him a job.

At last, he took him to the village chief, in spite of the scandal that nobody was prepared to work for him permanently. That was because, he never paid them any salary. His argument was, he never called anyone to work for him; they had come to him in search of work, so he would only give them work!

Mallan, too, did not get any

wages. But he was given food twice a day. Almost three years went by. Mallan got fed up; he told his master that he was quitting the job. He gave three rupees to Mallan and said, "That's your salary. That settles our agreement, and I don't owe you anything more."

Mallan was furious. "These three years, you never gave me a pair of clothes. And you've given me just three rupees! Have I earned only that much?"

"You don't deserve even that, you fellow!" the village chief shouted. "And you're now demanding clothes! Get out of this place!"

Poor Mallan did not wish to continue his protest. He decided to move to the nearby town with the three rupees in his pocket. On the way, he met a beggar. "Could you give me a rupee, please?" he begged of Mallan.



The boy smiled. "I've just three rupees with me," he said. "How can I spare anything from that?"

"But you have at least three rupees!" remarked the beggar. "I don't have a single rupee. Even if you give me one rupee, you'll still be left with two rupees. If you give me a rupee, I can buy a piece of cloth to cover my body."

Mallan now took pity on him. He gave him a rupee and proceeded on his way. A few yards later, he saw another beggar on the way. He was taller than the other beggar. He, too, asked the boy for a rupee. Mallan told him how he was left with only two rupees. "You can really spare one rupee, and you'll still have one rupee left with you," the beggar pleaded.

Mallan took pity on that beggar, too, and parted with one rupee. He had not walked far when he met a third beggar, who was taller than the first two beggars. He, too, asked Mallan for a rupee, and after arguments, he was so fed up that he decided to give up the lone rupee in his pocket. "You've given away all the three rupees to three of us," said the beggar. "That shows you've a kind heart. I shall, therefore, grant you three boons. Be



careful while you choose the first boon."

After a careful thought, Mallan said, "Long, long ago, Lord Krishna made everybody dance when he played on the flute. If I could get a flute, I can go about pleasing everybody."

"Granted!" said the beggar, benignly. "What's the second boon you wish to have?"

"I would like to have a stick with which I can hit even something farthest from me," said Mallan.

"You have it!" said the beggar. "And your third wish?"

"Whatever I ask anyone, he must

give it to me!" Mallan spelt out the third boon.

"That, too, is granted!" said the beggar, who then disappeared.

Mallan began walking again, but he found the heat of the day unbearable. So, he rested in the shade of a tree till evening. He got up and continued his journey to the town, where he went to a cloth shop. Whatever he asked for was given to him. He went up to a stable and demanded a horse. The owner gave him the horse he pointed. Attired in new clothes, he mounted the horse and went back to his village.

He stopped in front of the village chief's house. "What's this, Mallan?"

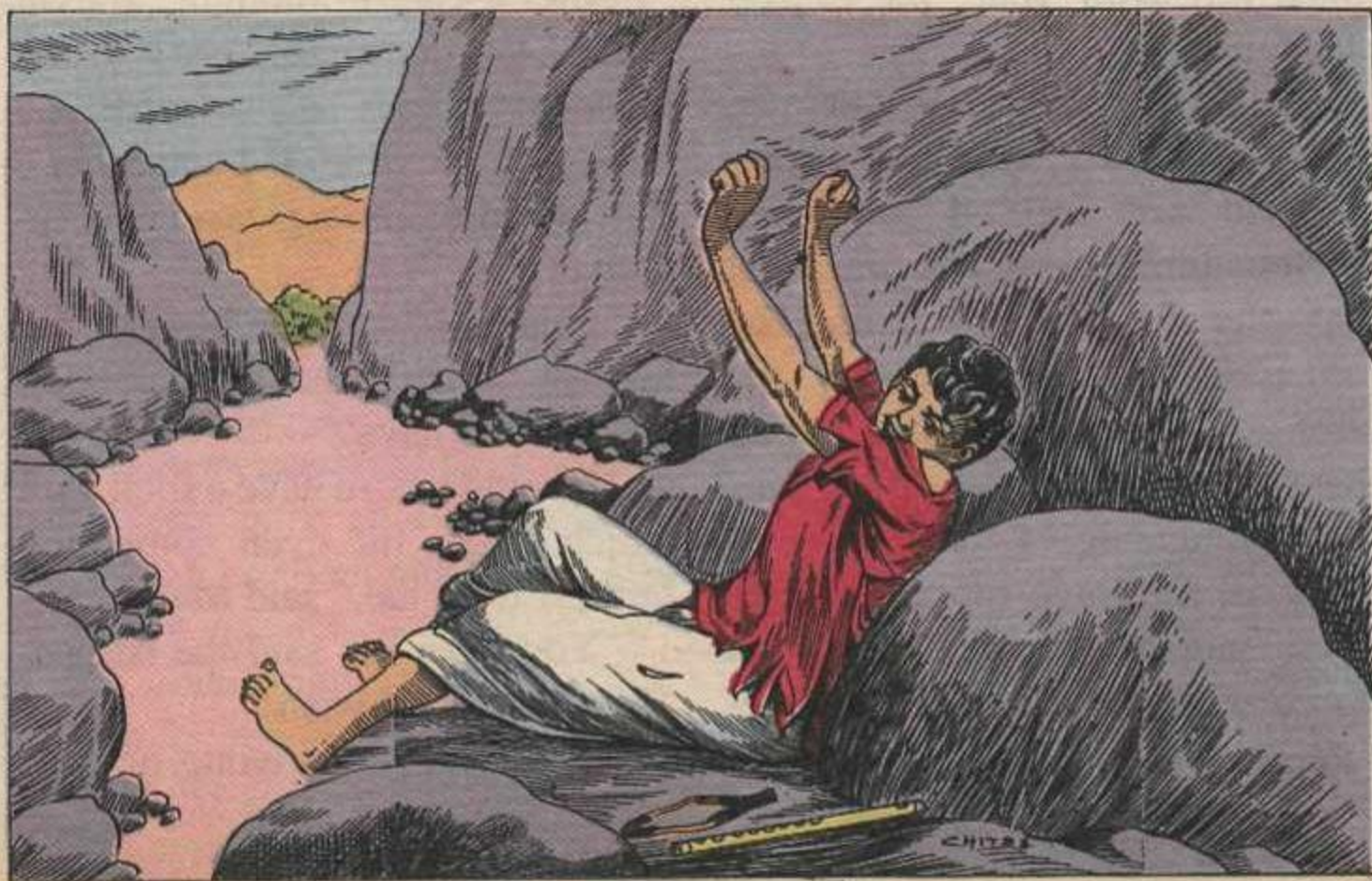
asked the village chief, rubbing his eyes. "You seem to have acquired some wealth!"

"Yes!" said Mallan casually.

It was then that the village chief noticed the flute in Mallan's hand. "Oh! A flute? So, you've learnt music, too, in such a short time?"

"You've guessed correctly, sir!" said Mallan. "Besides, I can reach anything howsoever far it is from me! Why, I can hit even birds on that tree, yonder there!" he added with a glee.

"Are you trying to boast?" remarked the village chief. "Don't try anything like that on me, Mallan! You can't even drive away the birds,





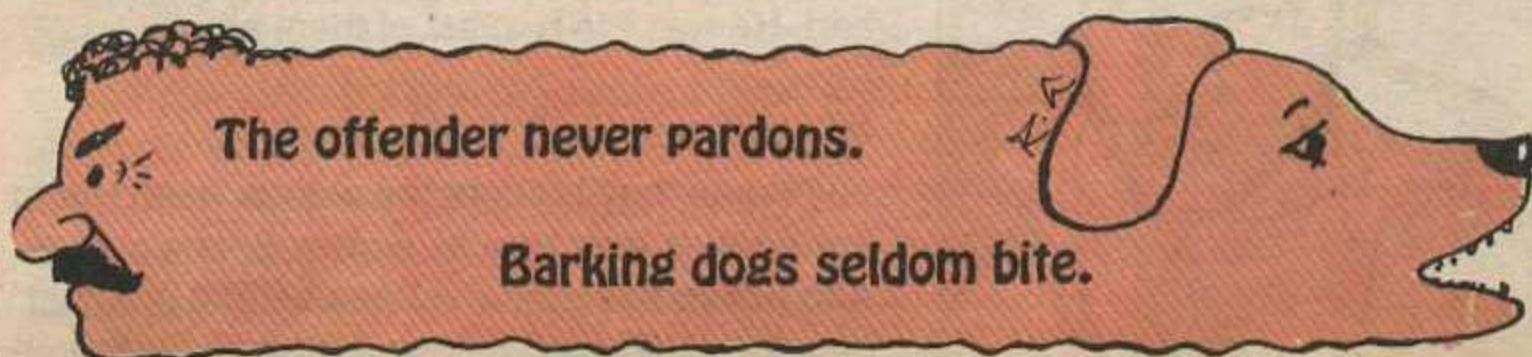
let alone hit them! If you're able to hit one of them, I shall give you all the land that I have. It's a challenge. If you hit them and they fall down, I shall myself go and pick up the birds. Just try once!"

Mallan pulled out his catapult, fixed a stone on it, and took aim. Two birds fell down, but they fell into a pit where a plant with a lot of thorns grew. The village chief did not see the thorny bushes till he jumped into the pit. He was unable to stand still. He began dancing in the pit when Mallan pulled out his flute and played a tune. The chief's clothes were caught among

the thorns; and he also sustained injuries on his legs and arms.

Mallan stopped playing the flute. By then, the village chief had managed to come out of the pit. "Do you remember that day when you sent me away? When I told you about my torn clothes, you grumbled. I'm happy, I had had my revenge on you. Now, you may go!"

The village chief apologised to Mallan and asked him to go with him to his house. He paid Mallan's salary for three years in full. The boy then drove back to his own house. His father was happy to see him.



SPORTS SNIPPETS

The "greatest" is no more

A nation went into mourning for three days for her sporting son. The nation was Brazil, and the sportsman was Ayrton Senna. As Formula One motor racing driver, he was world champion three times. He died on May 1, when his Williams-Renault crashed into a concrete barrier at high speed (300km per hour) during the San Marino Grand Prix in Imola, Italy. He was then on his seventh lap and leading the race. Born in 1960, Senna experienced his first race in a go-kart in his home city of Sao Paulo when he was only four. In 1977, he was the Pan-American go-kart champion. In 1981, he went over to England and in the same year, became British Formula Ford 1,600 champion. He became world champion in 1988, 1990, and 1991. Until now he had escaped serious injuries in all accidents. "The life of a racing driver is measured in seconds or, to be more precise, in thousands of a second," he was reported to have said once. Senna was accorded a state funeral on May 5 in Sao Paulo. Nearly 250, 000 people waited in a 7km long queue to file past his coffin. A 21-gun salute boomed when the cortege left for the cemetery 18 km away. The path,



lined by tens of thousands of people, had to be cleared by mounted police. The French champion Alain Prost, who attended the funeral, remarked: "We were rivals on and off the track, but it is only now that I realise how much I'll miss him." It is said that no other Formula One driver had conquered their greatest enemy—fear—as Senna had. He was the bravest of them all.

World record eclipsed

"Home they brought the warrior dead" sang the poet. It was true in Ayrton Senna's case. Another sportsman, who became "the greatest" only the other day, received a hero's welcome



when he returned home to Trinidad on April 21. The West Indian batsman, Brian Lara, had on April 18 scored 375 runs in the fifth and final Test against England in Antigua. He thereby broke the world record (365 not out) that stood in the name of another West Indian (Gary Sobers) made way back in 1958, against Pakistan at Kingston, Jamaica. Sir Garfield Sobers watched from the stands his 36-year-old record being surpassed. Prime Minister Patrick Manning and his cabinet colleagues joined hundreds of cricket lovers at the Piarco airport to receive 24-year-old Lara. On April 24, he was awarded the Trinity Cross, which is Trinidad's highest honour. A city street in capital Port of Spain has been named Brian Lara Promenade. "It's really great. I'm really happy. The best day in my life," Lara is reported to have remarked soon after he became the holder of the highest individual score in cricket history. He began with a double century (277) a year ago against Australia in Sydney. Then

came 167 against England in Georgetown, Guyana, in March last. His third was the chanceless 375 in his 16th Test. The other members of the 300-plus club are Len Hutton, Walter Hammond, Graham Gooch, Andy Sandham, John Edrich (all of England), Don Bradman, Bobby Simpson, Bob Cowper (Australia), Hanif Mohammed (Pakistan), and Lawrence Rowe (W. Indies).



Gathering of 'milers'

May 6, 1954 was a great day for the mile! Roger Bannister of England (now 65 and a neurosurgeon) become the first man to run the

mile in less than 4 minutes. On a cinder track in Oxford, he clocked 3 min. 59.4 seconds. Six weeks later, John Landy of Australia, broke that record at Turku, Finland, in 3 : 57 . 9 sec. Later that year, in the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada, Bannister and Landy finished in the first and second places. Between then and now, the record had "changed hands" some 14 times—the current holder being Algeria's Nouredine Morceli who has brought the timing down to 3 : 44 . 39. On May 4 this year, all the "milers" gathered at Oxford to celebrate the epoch-making event that happened 40 years ago. Among them were, besides Bannister and Landy, Peter Snell, Herb Elliot, Michael Jazy, Jim Ryun, John Walker, Filbert Bayi, Sebastian Coe, Steve Ovett, and Steve Cram. Can you guess what they talked about? Who and when will the mile be run at 3 min. 30 seconds?





Argument Accepted

Nalini, who was born and brought up in a town, got an opportunity to visit a village. She reached the house of her aunt to attend her daughter's wedding. The house was in the valley of a mountain. Nalini's father, Mahalingam, was a prominent merchant in the town. He had taken his family to join the festivities in his sister's place.

A day after the wedding, Mahalingam got ready to go back to the town. "Father, may I stay back here and return after a week? I am attracted by the scenic beauty of this place; I like the mountain ranges, the river and the farms. I've fallen in love with Nature! Please, let me enjoy the beauty for a few more days."

Before Mahalingam could say 'no', his sister's second daughter, Vimala, went up to him and pleaded: "Uncle, let Nalini stay here for some

days. I'm here to give her company. She has come here for the first time. Let her enjoy the place. I shall myself escort her back to the town."

Mahalingam had no choice except to accept his niece's plea on behalf of his daughter. He went back along with his wife. Nalini spent most of her time in the mangroves and by the side of the gurgling waters of the river. She and Vimala visited the temple on top of the hill every day and saw the enchanting beauty of the valley down below. Her uncle's rose garden was yet another attraction. She watched the sunrise from the garden.

One day, Vimala was not feeling well, so she was unable to accompany Nalini, who then started on her own. That day, the sunrise was a glorious sight, and she did not take her eyes off though she was walking at the same time. Suddenly, she

thought something had bitten her. She looked on the ground, and among the bushes. It was a snake.

She tried to hurry home, but soon fainted and fell down. When she regained consciousness, she was lying on a cot in a small house. Near the cot was a stool and a young man was seated on it. He was anxiously watching her face. The moment she opened her eyes, he heaved a sigh of relief. "Ah! You're awake! Are you feeling dizzy?"

Nalini did not reply. She merely shook her head. "I found you lying in a rose bed. I brought you here and sent word to your people. I did some medication. You shouldn't have gone out alone. Better sleep for some more time. You'll be all right soon."

By then, her aunt and uncle arrived. They were comforted to see her safe. She saw them looking at the young man with gratitude. "Sreedhar! You were a godsend. You saved her life. We shall ever be grateful to you!"

They wanted to take Nalini along with them. "No, let her rest here for the entire day. I can then know how effective the medicine I gave her is."

The next day, Sreedhar took her back to her uncle's place. "Sreedhar is a nice boy," said her aunt. "His



father was an expert in treating cases of poisoning. His grandfather, too, was a physician. After his father's death, Sreedhar has taken to prescribing antidotes for different kinds of poisoning. All three of them gave free treatment. Their income is from the farms they own."

Nalini, from then, had a soft corner for Sreedhar. A handsome man, Sreedhar had saved her life, didn't he? She felt grateful to him; she should have thanked him earlier. She waited for an opportunity to do so. During the days she remained in the village, she did get one or two chances to meet him and express her



gratitude. One evening, just before she had decided to go back to her town, she met him and told him, "I've been suppressing a thought within myself. I would like to reveal it to you now. I very much like to own the one who had saved my life. In short, I would like to marry you, Sreedhar. What do you say?"

"I know all about your family," replied Sreedhar. "You're all rich people. I'm a poor farmer. So our alliance may not work well. Your people may not agree to such an alliance."

"That part of it you may leave it to me, Sreedhar," said Nalini with

confidence. "I shall get their approval. It's not the approval of others that's of greater importance. Do you like me? That's what I want to know."

"If you have that much confidence, then I've no objection," said Sreedhar.

Soon after Nalini returned home, she broached the subject with her father and mother. She told them of her accident and how Sreedhar had saved her life. Also how she liked him and wished to marry him.

Unlike other parents, Mahalingam did not appear shocked. His daughter's happiness was his only concern. He immediately left for the village to confirm the alliance. The same day he returned. One look at his face, and Nalini knew that something untoward had happened. "No! This wedding will *not* take place!" he blurted out.

Nalini was all puzzled. He had agreed to her wish and had gone to the village merely to confirm the alliance. What had made her father now change his attitude and why did he return the same day? Her mother took courage in asking him, "Why? What happened?"

"He's not ready to come over here, stay with us, and look after my



business. He wants to remain in the village and continue treating patients. He says that's his duty. Whoever marries Nalini must live with her. How then can the marriage take place?" Mahalingam argued. There was anger and frustration in his words.

Nalini left for the village the next day. She went to Sreedhar's house. "Ah! You've come at meal time, Nalini. Wouldn't you wait for a moment? Let me get some food for you."

"No, Sreedhar, I haven't come here to share food with you," said Nalini. "In fact, I ate at my aunt's place. Now, did you tell my father that you can't marry me and come over to the town and look after our family business?" she queried, with a tinge of anger. Without waiting for an answer, she continued, "Just as you wish to continue your father's profession, I too want to look after my father's business. Is there anything wrong about that?"

Sreedhar was not at all shocked to hear all that from Nalini. He was not upset, either. "I agree in principle to what you've said. That's how it should be, provided it's convenient to everybody. But there's some difference in this case. You can get any



number of people in the town to look after your father's business. On the other hand, if I were to leave the village, who's there to treat people if they suffer from poisoning? It was because I was readily available here that your life could be saved."

Just then, a beggar came that way. "I haven't eaten for two days. Can I get some food here?"

Sreedhar brought his own food from inside and gave it to him. He and Nalini watched him eat with relish. "You'll live for a thousand years!" the beggar wished Sreedhar before he went away.

Nalini was now aware of some-





thing more about Sreedhar. She rose without uttering a word. "Why're you silent, Nalini?"

"Oh! I was contemplating what kind of arrangements we should make for our wedding!" said Nalini. Sreedhar could not believe his ears. "Yes, Sreedhar, I now know how great you are! It's only now that I realise your traits. Not many will be service-minded as you are. I feel

fortunate that I'll get a husband like you."

Sreedhar had such farsightedness. He wanted to be of as much service and help to people as possible. He was willing to marry anyone who too would have such a mentality. And he found such a person in Nalini.

Before long, their simple wedding took place.



The new teacher thought, one of her pupils was rather dirty. She sent the boy home with a note : Mohan is not clean. See that he bathes more often.

The next morning the boy came with a note pinned on his dirty shirt. It read : Mohan is not a flower. Don't smell him — teach him!

R. RAMESH.





It is said that hair can grow even after a person dies. How is that?

- Vijayaraghavan, Manjeri

Even after someone's death, the cells in the body continue to function until the "fuel" supply is exhausted. Human cells are variously described as power plants and factories! The hair follicle has two layers – an outer layer of cells and an inner layer composed of horny, fibrous cells. Hair grows upwards from the bottom of the follicle by multiplication of the soft cells which become elongated.

How does a kite fly?

- Mohini Puri, Kanpur

A kite has a very light frame covered with paper, and a long string attached to it from one end. As we hold up the kite in our hands with our back to the wind, the wind picks it up and carries it to the skies. The force of the wind keeps the kite going higher and higher in the air. A slight tuck given to the string enables the broad side to receive the force of the wind.

Isn't it strange that what we call white grapes are really green, and black grapes are either dark purple or red?

- Chintaman Negi, Shimla

The green grapes are turned into white wine, while red wine is made from "black" grapes. The white grapes get a greenish yellow colour when ripe. By the way, what we eat are dessert grapes. The grapes used for wine-making are specially cultivated.

Say "Hello" to text books and friends
'Cause School days are here again
Have a great year and all the best
From Wobbit, Coon and the rest!





It's time to go back to school again. Time for text
books. Time for games. Time to meet old friends.
And make new ones. Time to start studying
again. Because there's so much to learn about
the world around you.

From all of us here at Chandamama, have a
great year in school. And remember to tell us
what you've learnt everyday, when you
come home from school !



H A N D A M A M A

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Sharibagavalli



Sundaramurthy

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for April '94 goes to :-

Mr. Arindam Chakraborty

C/o B. Chakraborty, NDDDB Block - DK, Sector - II

Salt Lake City,

Calcutta - 700 091.

The winning entry : "Life Behind" "Life Ahead"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

A little learning is a dangerous thing.

—Alexander Pope

If we take care of today, god will take care of the morrow.

—Mahatma Gandhi

I have always believed that good is only beauty put into practice.

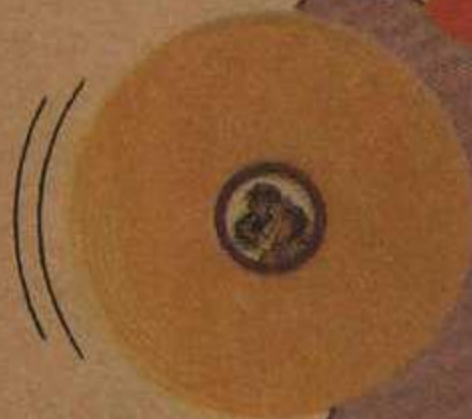
—Rousseau



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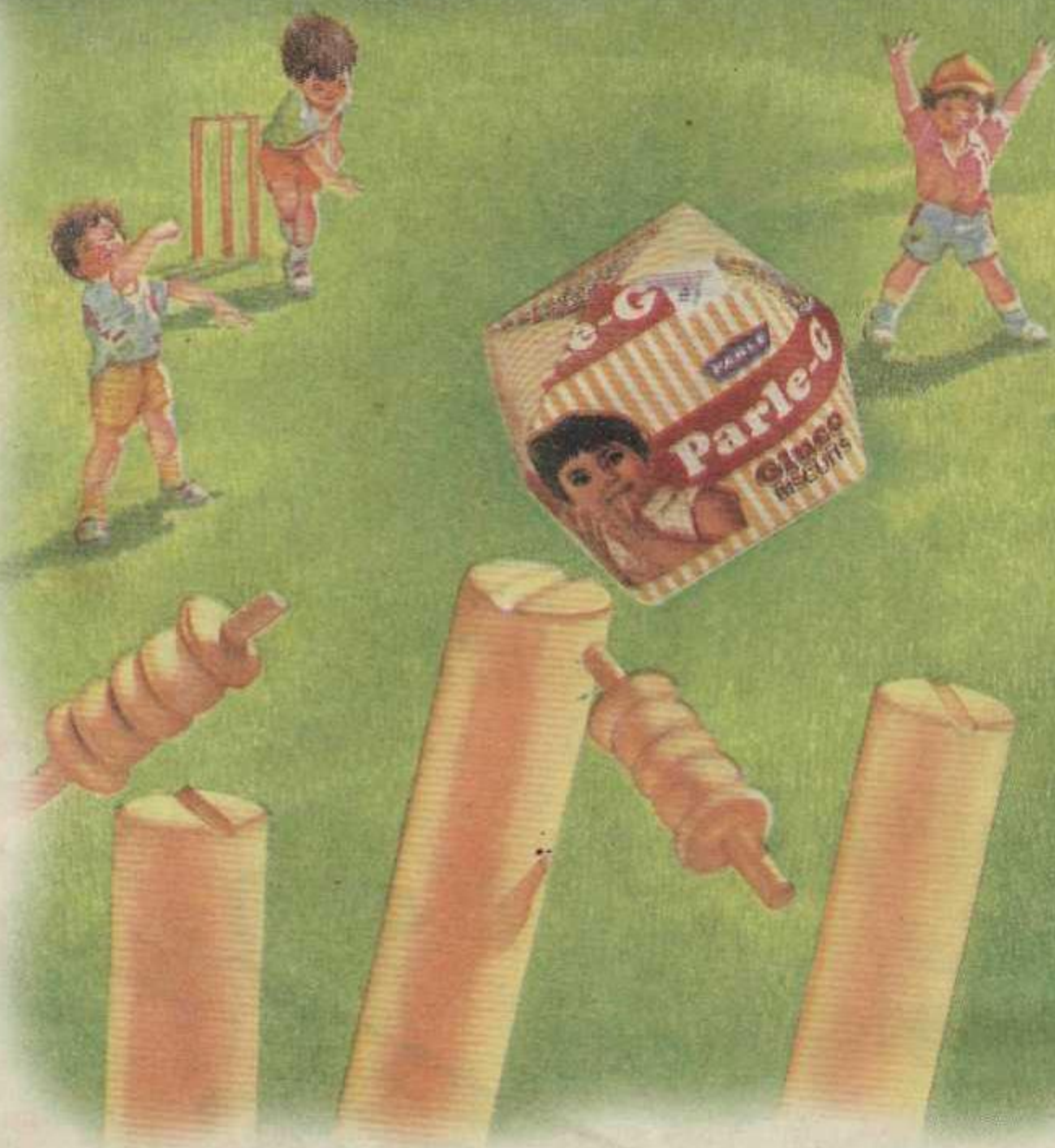


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